Serfojee Rajah 1829

DE VERE;

OR, THE

MAN OF INDEPENDENCE.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF TREMAINE.

My free drift
Halts not particularly, but moves itself
In a wide sea of wax.

SHAKSPEARE.

Power to do good, is the true and lawful end of aspiring; for good *thoughts* (though God accept them), yet, towards men, are little better than good dreams, except they be put in act; and that cannot be without power and place, as the vantage and commanding ground.

BACON.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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1827.

SHACKELL AND BAYLIS, JOHNSON'S-COURT.

TO

HENRY, EARL OF MULGRAVE,

VISCOUNT NORMANBY,

BARON MULGRAVE,

KNIGHT GRAND CROSS OF THE MOST HONOURABLE ORDER OF THE BATH,

&c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

As the following work treats much of independence of mind, and of the effects which ambition produces upon the heart and character of man, I know not that I can ask a better grace for it, than to be allowed to inscribe it to one who has run through so great a career as

your Lordship, reaping from it nothing but honour. But though I have been a witness to the devotion of your life to public duty, perhaps no part of it inspired me with more admiring respect, than the disinterested manner in which, after so ably administering your power, you voluntarily laid it down. Surrounded by the friends of your love, and who give you all their veneration in return, you are a happy example of the better sort of ambition treated of in this work.

I have other reasons, of private attachment, which make me not less glad to profit by an opportunity of marking my grateful respect for your virtues: but with these, however they may influence individual feeling, the world is not concerned.

That Providence, which preserved you amid the dangers of your earlier career, may continue to watch over you during the repose of your honourable life, is the sincere wish of

Your most attached Friend,

And obliged humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

London, March 6th, 1827.

PREFACE.

THAT species of literary composition called the Novel has been carried to so consummate a pitch of perfection during the last twenty or thirty years, that, in its power of delineating, exciting, or soothing the human heart, it almost rivals the Drama itself. True, the Novel must ever want that great advantage of the Drama, which the name of the latter implies,—that of *representing by action*; and it is also inferior, inasmuch as it never can soar into poetry. This, however, cannot be done even by Rhetoric, with

all its flowers; and both this species of writing, and Rhetoric itself, must always be content to be prose. And yet, as the Drama charms us in the closet without being acted, and also without being always poetry, there is no reason, *à priori*, why a Novel, founded on human nature, and not confined to *mere pictures* of things, should not assume as high a tone, and possess as much influence over us, as any *unacted* dramatic prose composition. As to representation, we are often more charmed with Shakspeare, in our libraries, than even upon the stage; and the plays of Miss Baillie, on the passions, speak to our minds as forcibly, and as beautifully, as if they were presented to the eye and ear by the best acting of Kemble or Siddons.

We allow, however, that the Novel, being confined to prose, loses not only the elevation of poetry, but that inexpressible charm which arises from beautiful, measured, and lofty language. The subjects of the Novel, too, being

for the most part busied with ordinary life, cannot entirely compare with the higher subjects of the Drama. In the Novel, whatever may have been done for it by exalted genius, we can scarcely expect to witness

> "Gorgeous Tragedy,
> In scepter'd pall, come sweeping by ;"

though the Author of Waverley has made even this almost doubtful.

A greater authority, indeed, than our's, carries its sentiments in favour of the Novel, as compared with the Drama, much farther than we do ; for in point of limit, and, as it were, in the abstract, it gives the preference to the Novel. "*There is no element* of dramatic composition," (says the Quarterly Review) "which may not be successfully employed in the Romantic ; but the Drama being essentially a much more limited representation of life than the Romance, many sources of interest are open to the latter, from which the former is completely

debarred." The writer adds, that "it is altogether out of the question *to limit, in any manner whatever*, the dominion of the sister art," meaning novel-writing. Finally, he says, that "as to materials, the empire of Romance *includes* that of the Drama, and includes therein perhaps its finest province."*

These sentiments, as they regard the *subjects* of Romance, are certainly correct. But inasmuch as they do not even allude to the great if not the only reason for the superiority of dramatic composition, (distinct from its capability of representation,)—namely, that its vehicle is, or may be, Poetry,—they are abstractedly perhaps not quite so just as they were intended to be. With this exception, however, the argument of the masterly article in the Review is unanswerable.

Take Poetry from the Drama, and, from its

* See Quarterly Review for Sept. 1826, p. 364—"Lives of the Novelists."

limited range, it becomes instantly inferior to Romance; for even in point of language, its superiority is lost. To this latter fact, our few tragedies in prose bear testimony. In regard to Comedy, too, even though sustained by dialogue and visible action, there is no reason (except as drawn from the merits of the respective writers) why it should bear the palm from the narrative mode of composition.

We have mentioned the Author of Waverley. What dramatist, except Shakspeare, surpasses him? Who else can even approach him in his delineations of character; his knowledge of the human heart and mind; the beauty, variety, and magnificence of his descriptions? Waverley, Old Mortality, Kenilworth, Ivanhoe, Quentin Durward, Rob Roy, and the Heart of Mid-Lothian, produce all the effect of perfect Dramas, except that they are in prose. The first (but for this exception) might rank even as an epic poem. Yet all these are Novels.

As to knowledge of mankind, nothing forbids (on the contrary, every thing requires) that the novelist should be at least as consummate an observer of the passions as the writer of dramatic poetry. There is, perhaps, more knowledge of the heart, and more acuteness of observation in Gil Blas, than in all the plays of all nations put together, save only those of Shakspeare. If, therefore, "the proper study of mankind is man," the Novel should never have lost it's relative consequence in comparison with the Drama. It did lose it, however, after Fielding and Richardson were no more; and, with the exception of the Vicar of Wakefield, some few other elegant compositions, and the Novels of Smollett, (which are broad satires, rather than pictures of mankind,) this species of writing dwindled into trash, in the hands of feeble men or of mere fanciful women.

For the honour of the sex, however, it was

Woman that restored the Novel to its usefulness, and therefore to its consequence. Witness Madame D'Arblay, who led the way; and Miss Edgeworth, who pursued it with an effect, an attraction, and a success which all admit. The last, indeed, showed that the sunken and despised Novel, might, when restored to its vigour, be converted even into an instrument of a nation's good. If the love, the respect, and often the admiration which their English fellow-subjects now feel for them, are of any value to the Irish, in exchange for the cold and most unjust disparagement with which the Irish character was once treated here, I will venture to hazard an opinion, that to this change Miss Edgeworth has very much contributed. To both nations, therefore, she may be considered as an amiable benefactress.

In all these respects, then, the descriptions of character, (by which I do not mean mere passing manners,) to be found in such novelists

as I have mentioned, may be not unworthy the moral philosopher himself; and if History is, as it has been called, Philosophy teaching by examples, so also may be the Romance, if properly conducted. The difference, indeed, appears at first sight to be a marked one; for History is busy with real, Romance with imaginary events. But the difference is only seeming; for, if the imaginary events are (what they ought to be) perfectly consonant with nature, the lesson is the same. Who inquires whether the workings of Macbeth's mind on the stage—his half resolves—his fear and remorse, and final surrender of himself to wickedness,—who inquires whether these are true or false in regard to the Macbeth of history? Most probably they were all imaginary, and only *conceived* in that wonderful brain which had observed them elsewhere.

All this eulogy, however, of the species of writing we are upon, only increases the difficul-

ty which the Author has to encounter, in introducing his own work to the public: for, in proportion as the line of writing he has chosen, is important, his responsibility for pursuing it must be perilous; and it would, perhaps, have been better policy not to have extolled an art, in which, on that very account, he may only be found the more wanting. Nevertheless, his respect for many professors of it is so great, that he could not resist this tribute to it, considering how much it formerly was undervalued.

With regard to the following work, as it has taken Ambition for its subject, one would think little would be necessary to explain it farther. We all of us know this to be one of the great passions, if not the greatest passion of the human mind. It has, at least, been the cause of most of the great crimes of mankind; and most materially, therefore, is it interwoven with the happiness and

the actions of men. He, indeed, is either more or less than man, who has not at one time or other, felt its power. It, therefore, generally shows itself by producing great situations, ending in great events.

And yet those who expect such events and situations here—who look for the consequences of ambition, as they appeared in the prominent characters of history, such as Cæsar, or Cromwell, Wolsey, or Richelieu, Buckingham, or the Guises—will be disappointed: for the tale, though not of the present, is comparatively of modern times, and of a civilized nation; and the effect of high civilization, like that of politeness in private life, is to reduce every thing as much as possible to a smooth surface and to comparative tranquillity. In times like these, there can be no very dazzling or overpowering virtues; no very atrocious crimes to record; in such times, we should in vain wish with Sallust, "*præclari facinoris famam quærere.*"

It follows, therefore, that the kind of ambition which is here chosen for a subject, must be totally wanting in splendour, and that the work, in point of events, can have little imposing belonging to it. Nevertheless, the human heart remains the same, under all appearances, and the study of it will ever excite our first and best interest. The less fertile, therefore, the time in great events, and the greater the refinement which manners assume, the greater may be the nicety required to unmask the heart, and unfold its operations; and thus it may become, in itself, a matter of more subtle interest. Still, where there is nothing to record but the common occurrences of a peaceable, civilized æra, there will undoubtedly be more difficulty in awakening the passions of the reader, than where his attention hangs on the grandeur of kingdoms, the fate of princes, and

> "The grappling vigour and rough frown of war."

The action, however, in this work, is not confined to ambition. There is another passion, (if it may be called a passion,) in the pride of independence of De Vere, which challenges attention: for it bears up the hero under all his little reverses, and is the main cause of much of the action.

As to the public characters mentioned, it is a pleasure to think that the unfavourable specimens of them are drawn from what men have been, not what they are. To look into the accounts formerly given by public men of themselves, as well as of each other, makes us tremble; and we are only consoled by the conviction that such accounts are deserved no longer. Were Halifax, therefore, or Bolingbroke, Swift, Chesterfield, Doddington, and Lord Orford, and (would we were not forced to add to these!) that pattern of a high-minded gentleman, Lord Waldegrave; if these were to revive, they would look in vain among our public characters

for the prototypes from which they drew their portraits. The whole Walpolian and Pelham school is at an end, and the spirit in which the present work closes, includes no greater eulogy than may be said to be deserved by all our statesmen of later times.

But the mention of this part of the subject, brings us to topics of fearful consequence, should they be viewed and judged of by prejudice rather than candour: for the production of ministers and public men on the scene, however ideal, or removed from the passing time, or even however distant from real likeness to individual character at any time, can hardly fail to produce effects which may be made most painful to the Author's feelings. He is aware that throughout the scenes of the work, (and they are many,) which are occupied with political ambition, he steps upon dangerous ground, "*Per ignes suppositos doloso cineri.*" He therefore desires most seriously, distinctly, and with-

out a reserve, to declare in the outset, once and for ever, that no particular person is meant to be pourtrayed by any of the Dramatis Personæ of this work. He declares once, and for ever, that he knows no such individuals as Wentworth or Beaufort; Mowbray or Cleveland; Lord Oldcastle or Clayton.

But it may be said that certain known traits and anecdotes have been introduced, in connexion with particular characters; and that these characters, therefore, must surely be intended to represent the persons (whether alive or dead), to whom the anecdotes actually apply.

From this imputation, the Author can hardly expect to escape, when he recollects, that because the real name of Corporal Trim was stated to be James Butler, the world immediately fastened upon Sterne the design of representing the Duke of Ormond. Yet surely a real anecdote of one person may be engrafted on the history of another, without identifying the two; and to

suppose the contrary, is as illogical as it may be uncharitable. A sufficiently striking illustration of this may be found in the present work, where an anecdote of the late Mr. Windham is made applicable to such a person as Clayton. Mr. Windham was, as is known, expressing his fears, that he was too downright for a public man; and Dr. Johnson, in jest, observed, "Never fear, Sir; I dare say, in time, you will make a very pretty rascal." But Mr. Windham was all honour; Clayton, all deceit. Will, then, the application of the anecdote fix upon the author an intention of making the two characters the same?

But there is a chronology, if not directly set forth, yet at least made cognizable by anecdotes and quotations, so that the reader may fix nearly the very year when some of the events happened.

This could scarcely have been avoided; and the Author trusts to the candour of the reader,

that he will not fix this upon him as a proof of things which he did not intend. All events must be in time; and if an imaginary story touch upon occurrences of a public nature, it will naturally fix its own chronology. But hard, indeed, would it be, that what is purely imaginary, must therefore be incrusted with a real body; and that a character (perhaps even the most opposite to that really deserved) should be allotted to any individual person. Some latitude ought surely to be allowed to an author in these respects, and he should be read only in the spirit in which he has written.

To apply this, and have done. A searcher of dates may be able to say, that the epoch of De Vere is about the time of Lord Chatham's last administration; nay, that the resignation, from illness, and the hints in respect to *former* glory, plainly show that he himself is intended.*

* Most unhappily for himself, his friends, and for the world, and to the Author's own grief, while almost in the

But though the last years of Lord Chatham's life may afford useful lessons to English ambition, all that the Author intended, in introducing a retiring great Minister upon the scene, was to paint generally, the intrigues which, *according to the characters in his work*, might be expected to follow such an event; not that those intrigues or characters were actually the same as in history.

In the same manner it is necessary, in the work, to introduce a Chancellor, for the purpose of a solemn judgment; and a critic might,

act of writing the above, another severe illness, of another good and great person has also occurred, in a manner as unexpected as lamentable; and this illness may possibly lead to a most important resignation in the present time. It might really, therefore, require some candour, if left unexplained, to believe that what is described of the same nature, in the work, may not have been intended with particular allusions to the present day. All that can be said upon it is, that the scene in the book was finished fourteen months ago, and actually in the press, before this last most sudden as well as unhappy event could have been even contemplated.

by the help of a political index, and an attention to the anecdotes scattered up and down the book, discover, that Lord Camden was probably Chancellor at the time; but still Lord Camden was not meant, for all that.

These inconveniences, however great, are, from the nature of the subject, unavoidable, while the scene is at home, and the time, from internal evidence, specified. It is, therefore, against the improper use of this specification that the Author asks leave to protest; he lays a claim which he hopes will be allowed, to be permitted to use illustrative anecdotes, or emphatic dicta, as mere general materials, without being tied down to the consequences of their being specifically and incorrectly applied. Such applications might have been eluded, by laying the scene in another country, and in no specified æra; but the ambition and the persons described, would not then have been English ambition, or English persons; and though the inconveniences might be cured, the

advantages would be lost. To remedy the inconvenience, and preserve the advantage, can only be accomplished through the candour of the reader, pondering the truth of these explanations.

DE VERE.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

THE TOUR OF BEAUCLERK.

Forth issuing on a summer's morn to breathe
Among the pleasant villages and farms.

MILTON.

Let the issue shew itself.

SHAKSPEARE.

WHY, in my old age, I have proposed to myself to record the passages of the earlier life of a person deservedly most dear to me, it is of little consequence for the world to know; though it is from a far higher motive than mere amusement. But if I think it right to direct their publication, after I am no more, that is another question, which ought to be explained.

It is simply then, because, however my task may be performed, it seems to me that the

early life of De Vere abounds in what may afford useful food for the heart; and exhibits that which no person can wish to imitate without being the better for it. With this reason for my undertaking, I shall, without further preface, proceed to relate how, in my early youth, I first became acquainted with him, and obtained his history up to that epoch. And though I almost immediately afterwards went abroad, and therefore was not an eye-witness of the important passages which directly followed, I shall proceed with the work to its close, as if I had been present, only assuring the reader, from the intimacy which afterwards grew between De Vere and myself, that my sources of information could not be more authentic.

In the year 17—, though just of age, and my own master, I grew, I know not why, tired of London; and, after finding that the Mall of St. James's Park (every leaf and lady of which I had got by heart) had lost its charms, and that I could even come away from the Opera before the ballet was half over, I resolved to commence a tour I had planned for the summer, and found myself one night at Dunchurch in Warwickshire.

To be sure I was rather surprised in the

morning, when my windows were opened, and I snuffed the air of a blooming orchard, and heard birds, instead of the cries of Piccadilly; but recollecting myself, I jumped up with all the alacrity of a youth just set free from what had ceased to interest him, in order to enjoy what at least had novelty to recommend it. My horses had been sent on three days before, and I mounted with all the gaiety of one-and-twenty.

But, reader, do not be afraid of an ordinary tour. No! I am not going to describe landscapes; my object is man. Not Warwick Castle, therefore, that midland splendour, shall detain me; nor even Kenilworth itself, that "princely palace of pleasure" of other times; not even though the latter has recently had a thousand interests attached to it, by the witcheries of one who is second alone to the great dramatic poet, in the brilliancy of his elucidations of England's story.*

In truth, though this storied fabric presents

* The novel of Kenilworth was published in 1821, and this might, on a comparison with the story, lead to a surmise that the author was a tolerably old gentleman when he wrote. But this passage is not only written in much fresher ink than the rest, but in a different hand, and moreover in a sort of note.—*Editor.*

volumes of associations by which we are enabled to remember what it *was*, it is too completely dilapidated to excite either much curiosity or much admiration in viewing what it *is*. Its grandeur is as a tale that is told. Nevertheless it proved, in the present instance, a source of interest, by furnishing the game of which I was in search.

On leaving Warwick, I was passed by a gentleman well mounted, whose open, yet lofty manner, and speaking countenance, even in the rapid glance I had of him, could not fail to excite my observation. I wished to behold him again, though I checked my first impulse to overtake him. It is too uncivil, thought I. To my satisfaction, however, he himself pulled up, and, without hurrying, I came close to him.

For some yards, each had an undisturbed view of the other, and I was struck with a turn of feature and general physiognomy, in which reflection and reserve seemed at first to predominate, to the exclusion of every thing else. His dignified air gave me the notion of a person of the very first breeding. Yet it seemed not the breeding of London, but had evidently a stamp of its own. Had I been in Spain, I should certainly have saluted him with a "Senor Cavallero;" and I thought of the days of Gil Blas.

But in England we are not made for this, and the stranger resuming his pace, was quickly out of sight.

I know not why, but I seemed sorry to lose him, and could not help wishing to inquire, of his groom, who he was. The groom was dressed in a jockey cap, and rather old-fashioned livery of tawney and red; and lingered awhile behind his master, occupied with something wrong about his saddle.

The sight of the ponderous Keep of Kenilworth, and its mouldering walls, from the mere interstices of which, a whole grove of birch and mountain ash pushed their white stems and red berries, drove the late object of my curiosity out of my head; and I had finished my view of the place, and was preparing to remount, when turning through the arch of an old labelled gateway, I saw him again.

He was just within the precinct; and, as he viewed the ruin, seemed lost in thought. Perceiving me about to enter too, which brought us front to front, he yielded the passage with a high but civil air; and this sort of approximation, even amongst Englishmen, (if they have ever stirred from home,) creates an opening to something more, if they please. In a French-

man it goes a good way towards a *liaison intime.*

In this instance it so far broke the ice between us, that each seemed prepared with some passing sentence; and mine, I own, was about the weather.

He, however, spoke first; and, in rather a deep, but yet the most musical voice I had ever heard from one of my own sex, observed upon the impossibility, changed as England was, of viewing such a place without feeling one's interest excited.

I assented; and, after pausing some time, he asked if ever I had visited this scene before?

I said "No," and that I was even a stranger to the midland counties.

He answered shortly, "You have then a very interesting country to see;" and bowing himself away, rejoined his horses, which were waiting for him at the outer gate, while mine had moved on.

He mounted, and was again quickly out of sight.

It was unaccountable what a wish I felt to be better acquainted with this stranger, and I almost lamented that my horses had not been ready with his, as it was possible, though I

thought not probable, that he might have permitted me to join him.

There was an interest about the whole manner of this person which I can neither describe nor account for; so directly did it address itself to the feelings. Before he spoke, the first impression excited was that of great esteem, or rather respect; but he had not uttered half a sentence before his countenance was lighted up with a play, if not a smile, about the mouth, which amounted to sweetness, and which, added to his voice, and the sparkle of an otherwise melancholy eye, converted one's reverence immediately into liking. But the moment he had done speaking his deep reserve was resumed, and he reminded me of the pictures of the great Prince of Orange, surnamed the Taciturn, who inspired Philip the Second with fear, even in the depths of the Escurial.

When he first passed me, I took him for a man of above thirty; but when I joined him again, I perceived that six or seven and twenty must be the outside of his age. I kept thinking of him as I loitered on, in a still evening, to Litchfield, till the beautiful cathedral of that city, with its twin towers looming in the twilight, and set off almost to magnifi-

cence in "the dun obscure," diverted my attention. I listened to the person who detailed the legend of the "field of dead bodies," and that other legend of Lord Brooke's death, at which many of our grandfathers have blessed themselves. There was still a third legend, almost as surprising, of William de Lichfield, the famous preacher of the fifteenth century, in whose study, after his death, no less than three thousand four score and three manuscript sermons were found.

The quiet little sovereigns of the present Close, employ themselves as edifyingly perhaps, but somewhat differently I trow. Whether they do or not, I love a Cathedral Close, with all its old buildings and canonical houses, and little aristocracy of clergy, and gentlemen's families of the county, who, however affable from nature, combine to keep the rest of the town at a distance, in proportion as the rest of the town treads upon their heels, or even goes beyond them in the influence of riches. Peace to their happy dignities.

I had a wish to see the

"Smug and silver Trent,"

so I pushed on the next day to Burton, when,

to my great joy, on entering the town, I again beheld my dignified acquaintance of the morning before.

I knew not whether the intercourse I had had with him authorized in me the liberty of recognition. I knew not if I was even remembered. But he himself put an end to doubt, by touching his hat. He rode gracefully, had a beautiful horse, and was pleased to commend mine. I say *pleased*, because it is extraordinary in the little instant of our acquaintance, what an ascendancy he seemed to have acquired over me.

As the road of each lay along the bank of the river we had crossed, and he spoke but little, except with that mute observing eye which had so attracted me, I began, in order that I might not again lose him in a hurry, a conversation, on the agreeableness of the river, and its etymology ; and asked his opinion whether the name really came from the French *trente* ; owing to its supposed thirty streams ; because the number, I said, was doubted.

"I believe in the derivation," said he, "if only for the sake of Milton, and should still do so even though some critic, in the spirit of a land surveyor, should prove to me that there were

actually but twenty-nine arms to it, instead of thirty."

"I recollect," I replied, "his emphatic invocation to the rivers, to which I believe you allude:

'And Trent, that like some earth-born giant spreads
His thirty arms along th' indented meads.'"

The gentleman looked assent, and approbation too, and took a closer measure of me with his eye, than he had hitherto done. It seemed to say, "are you worth knowing?"

As the talk I found was to be on my side, I then ventured to say, "you have a finer river still, I believe, in Derbyshire?" and mentioned the Dove.

"'Tis more romantic," he replied, "but not so beneficial to the farmer, or merchant."

"The descriptions I have read, but particularly the enthusiasm of Cotton about it, in the most charming pastoral in the world, has brought me," I observed, "into this country."

"You refer," said he, "to old Izaack Walton;" and again he threw his eyes over me from head to foot. He then added, "As you seem on a tour, I cannot help wishing for the honour of our country, that you had not made it with-

out a better guide than the mere maps and travelling directions with which you are no doubt provided; and I regret that as I have business at Sudbury, and must then cross back into Staffordshire, I cannot be of assistance to you; but you seem to have so much feeling for what you see, that I really should be glad, if you will permit it, to do the honours of the Dove, as far as our way lies together. Give me leave at the same time, if you will excuse the liberty, to ask who it is, I have the pleasure of addressing?"

As he said this with perfect good breeding, and as there was a sort of protecting manner in it, which seemed thoroughly natural in a man a few years my superior in age, who was also offering to do me a most agreeable favour, I accepted his kindness, adding, that my name was Beauclerk, son of the late Colonel Beauclerk, of Devonshire.

He said it was a good name, and told me his own, which was De Vere; he then added thoughtfully, that he believed a very near relative of his, and my father, had been brother-soldiers.

This was no bad passport to further civilities; and I accompanied him to different points of view on the river, which, though by no means so romantic as near its source among the hills,

let in a variety of wood, hill, and watered valley, such as I then had never seen equalled, and such as Milton has described as even to be found in Heaven. I could not help observing it to my grave companion, and rather warmly, rapt out the lines,

> "For earth hath this variety from heaven,
> Of pleasure situate in hill and dale."

My new acquaintance recognised the quotation, and seemed not at all displeased either with the passage or the warmth with which I applied it.

"With such a feeling for poetry," said he, "as you bring along with you, you are well qualified to travel in a pastoral country, which this is beyond every thing in England."

"I know not a happiness more pure," I observed, "than what we are now enjoying."

"Is that your real feeling," he said, "or is it only the evanescent sentiment of a young man, conscious that he will please his hearer by it?"

As he said this, he gave me a searching look, which I did not like; then suddenly apologized, and with no little ceremony, for a liberty which, he added, nothing could justify. He was severely silent for many minutes afterwards.

But his self-blame, (for so it seemed,) as well as my wonder, were forgotten in our approach to Sudbury, which now opened to our view.

The whole place delighted me. It seemed the very abode of Pan, and the *Dryadesque puellæ* of Virgil; only, the ample domain and keeping of a great English country gentleman, drove Virgil and his fauns out of my head, as soon as they got there. I was mute with the varying emotions caused by this enchanting place. It was not that there were any Salvator Rosa scenes; any of those craggy fells, glittering with rock and stream; any great lake, or sublime height, which a painter worships. But there was a well timbered park, vast and venerable enough to be the appendage of an ancient noble, yet not so boundless as to take away the notion of a perfectly domestic domain.

In the middle of it, the beautiful mansion itself reared a placid front, in which elegance and antiquity were so conjoined, and over which calm dignity so quietly presided, that it gave one the idea of a sylvan or rural reign, in the family that owned it, of the longest and most pleasing duration.

Such, indeed, had always been the happy seat of the Vernons, which, unlike most great

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARA

seats, rich as it is in nature and art, coupled with it the idea of the

> "Secura quies,
> Ac nescia fallere vita,"

generally to be found only in humbler scenes.

I was so occupied with the thoughts thus called up, that I became as silent as my companion; though, big with my impressions, I once burst out, with—

> "Et vos agrestum presentia numina fauni,"

and was going on, when perceiving how closely he watched me, I stopt, and contented myself with admiring in plain English prose.

"I am not surprised," said he, "at your impressions, which are my own almost at the present moment, when I see this place for perhaps the twentieth time. The best wish, therefore, which I can give you, is, that they may last; but the impressions of man—particularly of a young man——"

Here he again checked himself.

"My dear Sir," I could not help saying, "I hope these half-hinted prognostics are not ominous to me."

"I meant not to make you uncomfortable,"

replied he, "and beg a thousand times you will forgive me, for what I fear must have appeared very abrupt, if not very rude to you; and, as I must now leave you, permit me to add, that if you had not much interested me, I should not have thus offended against good breeding."

This apology was uttered in a manner so dignified, that it seemed as if I was the person offending, and I expressed my sincere regret that I was to see him no more.

"I know not why that should be," said he, "if really you have the command of your time, and care not where you bestow it: for little less than this should induce you to visit a man, though the son of your father's friend, utterly without power to contribute to your amusement. My abode is only in the next county."

"In Staffordshire!" cried I: "how gladly would I wait the conclusion of your business here, if you would allow me the benefit of your guidance through the forest of Needwood, which I purpose visiting in my tour."

The stranger smiled, and politely observed, that even if it did not lie in his way, it would give him satisfaction to do so; but, as it happened, nothing could be more convenient to

him, as the forest of Needwood was close to his door.

"If, therefore," continued he, "you will join me to-morrow morning at the prettiest inn in England, which is hard by, and ask for Mr. De Vere, I may probably in the evening have the honour to receive you at my house."

I said I should be too happy, and we parted, on my side, with regret.

CHAPTER II.

NEEDWOOD.

I know each lane, and every alley green,
Dingle, and bushy dell, of this wild wood,
And every bosky bourne, from side to side,
My daily walk, my ancient neighbourhood.
MILTON.

While here we march
Upon the grassy carpet of this plain.
SHAKSPEARE.

I WAS punctual to my appointment, and set out early with my interesting companion; who, however, but little relaxed from the thoughtfulness which seemed habitual to him. When we entered the forest of Needwood, indeed, his features became more complacent, and he was cheerful as he pointed out the different views, formed by glades of beautiful turf, dividing groves of old oak and elm, while the intervals were set off with thickets of thorn and beech, of the most grotesque shapes, forming the very revelling of forest scenery.

"All this, however," he said, with a sigh,

"will soon be cut down, and disappear in the progress of what is called improvement; and if increased happiness (the only real improvement I know) is the effect of increased population, for which of course food must be provided, I suppose it is rightly so called. Yes! I suppose it will be right, that these fine glades, and this green turf, which invite so much to healthful exercise; these extensive sheep walks, the only vestiges left to remind us of that pastoral life once so dear to England, and which charms us still in song and story; that all this," (he added with a lowering change of countenance) "should yield to the superior benefits conferred by the Cyclop's forge, and the weaver's shuttle. Yes! yes!" continued he, "I know I am wrong;" and he pushed on his horse, though the weather was sultry hot, as if to expel thoughts that were evidently not agreeable.

Soon, however, he resumed his previous manner, and seemed pleased to show the fine seats, or remnants of seats, in the forest; "the many parks, which Cambden talks of, wherein the gentry hereabouts frequently exercise themselves *with great application*, in the agreeable toil of hunting."

The evening now overtaking us, our ride was delicious, and we proceeded, not too briskly,

though in unbroken silence, till we came to a large park-like gate of seven bars, opening through a rough palisade fence which stretched across a broad avenue, (for it was too wide to be called a lane) which lay to the left. At this we entered. The trees seemed better timbered, and were more in line than the groups we had left. Every thing was grave and still; and the loud rebound of the gate in closing upon us, occasioned an echo through woods and fields beyond, which appeared to my then humour peculiarly solemn and pleasing.

The trees on each side formed the skirts of a forest road, on either hand of which lay a horse-path, over turf of the same elasticity with that which had rendered the open woods so agreeable, spite of even meridian ardors. The dew had now begun to fall; the green hue of every thing was heightened, and there arose a coolness which was only the more delicious from the contrast it formed to the magnificent heat we had left. The freshness of the scene seemed caught by our horses as well as ourselves.

My companion's horse, indeed, began to neigh with pleasure, as I thought, at the agreeableness of the scene, and even quickened his pace, as if by secret impulse, till the trees which lined

the road, terminating on the right, let in a fair seat or gentleman's residence, which I immediately stopped to examine.

What I at first thought a sunk fence before the house, displayed every thing to the best; but I soon discovered that it formed part of a moat, which went entirely round the mansion and offices. They stood in the midst of gardens laid out in a very old-fashioned style. Two immense gates of iron, of a very massive pattern, having barbs to their pikes, which had once been gilt, rose at each end of that part of the moat which fronted us. They were flanked by stone pillars of proportionate magnitude; on the top of one of which, the figure of a boar, cut in stone, supported a shield of arms of ancient simplicity, being quarterly gules, and or; while on the other, a talbot supported the same sort of shield azure, surmounted with the honourable distinction of a label of three points, and bearing a cinque-foil ermine.

The whole place looked so venerably interesting, that I could not help wishing a longer examination of it; but what chiefly struck me, was a large, and originally well shaped obelisk or column, which rose in the open space before the moat, fenced round with iron spikes. It was of yellowish stone, (at least made so with

age,) and in many places was crumbled so as to be defaced. On the pedestal, however, was a tablet which had been kept in sufficient preservation to make its inscription perfectly visible.

Curious almost to impertinence in these things, I jumped off my horse, (a movement which my companion did not oppose,) to read the inscription: it was in old characters, rather dilapidated; bore the date 1572, and read thus:

> "Trust in thy own good sword,
> Rather than Princes' word.
> Trust e'en in fortune sinister,
> Rather than Princes' minister.
> Of either, trust the guile,
> Rather than woman's smile.
> But most of all eschew,
> To trust in Parvenu."

Under the tablet was a device, cut rudely enough, in the same crumbling sort of stone, consisting of the shaft of a column, broken from its base, and the trunk of a tree hollow with age, but from which one or two fresh branches seemed to sprout, with the motto of

"Insperata floruit."

Rude, and even uncouth as all this was, I was pleased with it. The place seemed worthy of the

pillar; the pillar, of the sentiment; and both place and sentiment filled me with reflection. I feared indeed to detain my companion, but saw with pleasure he was disposed to give me all the time I could wish. He was however silent, till I remarked, as to the inscription, that there appeared more ingenuity in the thought, than skill in the execution; but that the thought itself was, I hoped, unfounded, and the poetry, even for that age, seemed bad.

"For the thought," returned my companion, "if you consider it unfounded, (which, at your age, is so natural,) I will not be the person to defend it. As for the poetry, I cannot pretend to say much for that; but you see it is at least very old. This identical inscription, tablet and all, was supposed to have been cut from the wall of the cabinet or oratory of Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford, at Castle Headingham, in Essex, the chief seat of the family. He was a poet, and not a very good one, but ranked with those of his time; and this, added to his quarrels with his father-in-law, Burleigh, for not saving his friend the Duke of Norfolk, according, as he thought, to a promise made, both by queen and minister, created a tradition in the family that the inscription was his.

"Whether in his passion, (for he was a man of most vehement spirit) by *Parvenu*, he meant the *minister*, whose family, though ancient enough, was not to be compared with his own; or whether it referred to an insinuating, designing flatterer of a secretary, who he thought had influenced the minister, I cannot make out; but I certainly am not averse to the sentiment contained in the last couplet, whatever I may be to those preceding; which also," he added with a sort of hesitating seriousness, "may have their favourers."

"Which of my ancestors," he then went on, 'transferred the tablet, and built a column for it in this place, I have never discovered; but mouldering as is this memorial of trust ill requited, the family never would suffer it to be taken down, and I have thought it my duty, whether from my love of quaintness, or from old prejudice, to follow their example, and have accordingly preserved it."

He ceased; and his last words surprised me not a little, since they announced my companion as no other than the owner of this singular, recluse, and interesting residence.

By this time his groom had dismounted, and opened one of the ponderous iron gates abovementioned, at which he stood with great respect

until his master should enter. As I was myself off my horse, my conductor followed my example, and leading the way, took off his hat as we passed the moat bridge into his demesne, and shaking hands with me with great courtesy, while he pointed to the two shields of arms on the pillars, and particularly to that supported by the boar (the device of the old Earls of Oxford), said I was welcome to Talbois, the ancient residence of the Astleys and De Veres.

"We are not what we were," observed he, with something, which I could not help thinking emotion; "yet more illustrious families than ours have taken the motto that would best become us,—'*Fuimus*.' God, however, knows what is good for us all, and submission to him is our honour as well as duty."

He said this with firmness, and almost even with cheerfulness; and I felt my respect rise higher and higher for him as he led the way towards the house.

CHAPTER III.

A SECLUSION.

No longer staying than to give the mother
Notice of my affair.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE house of Talbois, which owed its designation to the Angevin family of that name, which anciently possessed it, had been the residence of that Elizabeth Talbois, who bore a son to Henry VIII. whom he created Duke of Richmond. From that family, it passed to the famous Astleys, and by marriage to the De Veres. It was completely old-fashioned, but not now, as formerly, gothic. It was not even of the date of Elizabeth; though the mansion was moated all round. It had been rebuilt, in the time of Charles II., very differently from its original taste, though the architect, to my great delight, had preserved a precious relic of the old fabric, which, without

much inquiry into suitableness, he had, in all its quaintness, fairly transferred to the new one. This was neither more nor less than a balustrade, forming a parapet on the top of the walls, and shaped into large Roman letters, which exactly spelled the adage, "FEARE GOD OBAYE THE RIALL KINGE." This took up the whole front, parallel to which, ran a long, broad, and well kept gravel-walk, on the sides of which were placed orange-trees in tubs, each end terminating with a statue of marble.

None of the owners could find it in their hearts to fill up the moat; a disposition which was inherited to the full by the present owner, with the rest of their property.

The house and grounds——but why should I describe them, when I find it already done to my hand, in an old survey which I afterwards met with in the library? According to this, it was, (at least at the end of the seventeenth century), "the most delicious mansion in the county; the house is built of squarred stone, quite through; the gardens about it have delicate vistas, with many stately gates of iron-work, curiously painted and gilt, leading into them, with mounts, and places of repose at the end." I will not go on to describe, or rather transcribe,

"the curious water-works within a large rotunda, opening with fair iron gates opposite the house;" or, "the long fair canal, at the south end of which was a delicate grotto." Neither will I paint "the *statuas*, each in its own proper grove;" nor "the extraordinary plantations of trees, and admirable walks, to which, though there are other fine ones at other gentlemen's seats, yet none are comparable." I will not do this, because the water-works had been abandoned as too expensive to keep up; the grotto had fallen into neglect; and the canal become a mere tank, for carp and eels. As for the *statuas*, except the two at the ends of the broad walk in front of the house above mentioned, they had all fallen from their pedestals, and lay dismembered among the long grass, which had been allowed to overrun their appropriate groves. But for the plantations, they had long been cut down for nobler purposes than the mere pleasures of ornament and shelter, however natural, as well as agreeable, those usually are

On arriving at the hall-door we were greeted by rather a portly domestic, in the same old livery of orange-tawney and red, which I had observed on the groom; and Mr. De Vere, for-

getting me for a moment, rather eagerly asked if his mother was well.

"Her ladyship is quite as well as when you left her, and has been expecting you all day, Sir;" was the reply.

"Forgive me," said De Vere, "if for a few minutes I leave you, for an old lady who will be presently rejoiced to see you, but who generally receives me alone after any absence, and who perhaps," added he smiling, "will give me a little scold, for loitering with you so long in the forest."

At these words, but first conducting me into a large dining-room on the left, and telling me he would return in a moment, he proceeded up the great stairs to his mother's apartment.

This was as I wished; for, on first visiting a place, I am almost childishly inclined to examine it even to minuteness. It seems to give a tone and character to all that is to follow, or at least affects it to a certain degree. Left alone, therefore, I was able to examine the rich moulded panels of wainscot of the room I was in, and a rather heavy embossed ceiling, divided into projecting compartments, the ribs of which, as well as the panels of the wainscot, had formerly been

gilt, but so long ago, that it only indicated what had been.

But by far the most prominent feature, was a fire-place of immense dimensions, with double pillars on each side, from the floor to the ceiling, all excellently carved in oak. The two inner pillars, above the mantel-shelf, formed a panel for a whole length picture, which, when the room was afterwards lighted, I made out to be that of a general officer, dismounted, but leaning on his horse. What struck me, however, was the paucity as well as plainness of all the rest of the furniture.

Mr. De Vere not returning, I could not help straying into the hall, which was of large dimensions, some fifty or sixty feet deep, and perhaps half as many wide; at the bottom of which rose the great staircase, of such shining oak, that the glimmering of the twilight, let in from the windows above, was reflected to the eye from every step.

Here again the want of a furnished look, struck me with a notion of almost uncomfortableness; the grandeur of the hall in point of size, only telling you what it might be, if properly inhabited. The great door being left open, I advanced to the broad walk before it, but it had grown too dark to observe more in

the distance. There was, however, a freshness from the gardens and the green herbage of the lawn, which I snuffed with avidity; and the placid silence of the place, and my own strange position in it, who knew not of its existence a few hours before, involved me in a meditation not at all disagreeable; I was, therefore, rather annoyed to be roused by the servants bringing wax tapers to the dining-room, and lighting up the hall, so as to extinguish the twilight and my reverie at the same time.

The return of De Vere put an end to all flights of imagination, had I had leisure as well as inclination, to pursue them. With his usual politeness, he apologized for having left me so long, and announced that his mother, Lady Eleanor, was quite desirous to see me, having often heard his late father, General De Vere, mention mine with great esteem.

"You will find," said he, "the remains of some beauty, and such vivacity as sixty will permit. And if," added he, "you perceive it to be a little tinctured with a manner which near twenty years seclusion could scarcely fail to generate, you will not, I hope, think the worse of it."

So saying, he led the way up stairs, into an apartment of handsome proportion, but fur-

nished in the style of at least a hundred years back, somewhat tarnished, and neglected, but still respectable.

But the observation of such slight objects was banished in a moment, by the sight of the lady of the mansion, who rose from a ponderous fauteuil of crimson velvet, and presented a picture of age, which, even to my young view, seemed the most interesting I had ever seen. She was tall, and of a very commanding presence, without the least appearance of infirmity, (or even, as I should have said, of years,) except that her hair was of silver-white, which I afterwards understood had turned so, from the most raven black, in one night's time; the night in which she saw her husband die. Her features, particularly her dark, speaking eye, and above all, a very dignified manner, resembled those of her son; or rather, they expressed a still higher sense of superiority than was observable in him. Her figure and movement lost nothing from her dress, which was of black silk, set off by a small hoop, and a stomacher, and ruffles, as well as lappets of white lace. Such was he outward appearance, of Lady Eleanor De Vere.

At first, I was going up to her, with the jaunty air of the new school of London youthful vivacity; and had almost offered my hand, but found myself immediately checked, I knew not how, as if I had been in the *vieille cour*. Indeed, such it seemed, on her first courtesy, to be; but soon she put me at ease, by a natural frankness, which seemed only to have been restrained by education. She mentioned my father, as an esteemed friend of one who, she said, (and gave a little sigh as she said it,) never threw away his friendships. She was, therefore, glad of the extraordinary, and almost romantic rencontre with her son, which had given them the pleasure of receiving me; "though he has been not a little rash," added she, "in bringing you to a place and people, so utterly devoid of power to interest so young a man."

I made as suitable a compliment as I could, in return, and De Vere, relaxing much from his grave manner, pleaded for himself, that he had forewarned me of this, but that I seemed an enthusiast in travelling, and he hoped the beauty of the country, as well as its many antiquities, might interest me for some days.

"Is he an enthusiast?" said Lady Eleanor.

"So much the worse! But it is a fault which he has time enough before him to cure."

More was prevented by the entry of the same domestic who had greeted our arrival, and who announced that supper was served; when, Lady Eleanor ringing a little silver bell that was on the table before her, a young soubrette, of rather prepossessing appearance, issued from a tapestry door in an adjoining closet, where she performed her waiting, and flinging a little white laced cloak round the shoulders of her mistress, the latter rose to obey the summons. I would have offered her my arm, but she declined it, with a slight "thank you," and took her son's, which was held out as if in a regular course, which no person could be allowed to interrupt. I observed, however, that no arm was necessary, for she proceeded down stairs with as much ease as if only in her twentieth year, and seemed as if she could have tripped it, but that a sense of decorum forbade.

I followed, pleased with, if I might not say, admiring every thing I saw, so totally different from the scenes and manners I had left; where I recollected little difference in dress, or even manner itself, between girls and their grandmothers. In the humour I was in, though a

little constrained, it was a constraint which was not unpleasing, for it proceeded from a feeling of respect for my host and hostess, which almost made myself seem respectable.

CHAPTER IV.

A HUMOURIST.

I must have liberty;
Withal as large a charter as the wind,
To blow on whom I please.

SHAKSPEARE.

In the supper-room, our number was augmented, by a gentleman of no ordinary appearance, manner, and conversation. He had, what sporting people would call, the darkest brown muzzle of a complexion I ever saw, only made deeper by a black Brutus wig. He had also a searching, reflecting eye, in which (spite of a vibrating property in the lids, when under agitation,) benevolence seemed to beam; though a sardonic curl about the mouth, and a large distention of the nostrils, when he smiled, filled you with a thousand suspicions lest he should be smiling at *you*. There was a meaning in his look that made you afraid; although an otherwise open, intelligent physiognomy, spite of uncouthness, disposed you both to trust and like him, if he

would let you. When he shook hands with you, he kept you at arm's length, seemingly retiring from the ceremony, as if afraid of too much familiarity, or as if he said with Jaques, "God be with you, let's meet as little as we can." He seemed much past the meridian of life, but tall, erect, and pale; wore a blue coat of hunter's cloth, with high longitudinal slashed sleeves, and buttons of the same, under which was a red waistcoat. A large and old-fashioned cravat, blue cloth breeches, and speckled brown silk stockings, completed a picture not very fashionable, but by no means vulgar.

This gentleman was introduced to me by the name of Mr. Harclai, after he had first saluted De Vere with great *empressement*, shaking him by both the hands, in a manner the very reverse of that above described, with which he saluted me.

"I knew not you were here," said De Vere, "nor even that you were in the country."

"I have not been home," returned he; "but, calling to pay my duty to Lady Eleanor, and hearing you were expected, I willingly obeyed her commands to stay dinner, and was, without much difficulty, persuaded to take up my old quarters in the Hogarth room."

"We shall gain by it," said De Vere, doing the honours of the supper; "but how came we to miss you on our arrival?"

"He thought me too stupid to entertain him," observed Lady Eleanor; "so having staid as little after coffee as he decently could, betook himself to his own thoughts, and his usual night walks."

"You will certainly be found drowned in the moat some of these nights," said De Vere.

"And as good a retreat as we usually make," replied the guest.

I thought this an extraordinary sentiment, and again contemplated the person who uttered it, though without much satisfaction, when Lady Eleanor continued, "Do you know, Doctor Herbert protests against our keeping up the moat. He says it is out of all taste, and he almost makes Mortimer angry by abusing it."

"I would forgive him if that were all," said Mr. Harclai.

De Vere looked thoughtful, and then said, "By the way, I heard from Dr. Herbert at Sudbury. He is to be there to-night, and means to stretch over to us to-morrow."

"He is always welcome," said Lady Eleanor.

"He will tell you news of the world," ob-

served Harclai, "and the silken people in it. This will be at least amusing, and beats me all to nothing, who can only tell you of village politics, and ragged boys and girls."

"We shall have a court hater and a court lover, as usual," returned Lady Eleanor.

"I think I had better go home," replied Harclai; "I shall be in the way: though if he comes to persuade you into the world again, I could bear the brunt of another battle."

I thought both Lady Eleanor and her son looked uneasy at this, as if he were going too far before a stranger; and Lady Eleanor interrupting him said, "We must not allow you to abuse the world before our young friend here, who has just entered it. I will not have him prejudiced."

"He will find it out soon enough," returned Harclai; "even with all the fine lecture which I have no doubt the Doctor will read to us upon it to-morrow. Indeed, if I had his college, his gardens, and velvet bowling-green, and parsons to flatter, and youths to look up to me—"

"What then?" asked De Vere.

"Why, I should think the world a fine place, too," answered Harclai; "and this I once told

him. But as for his parsons, while they eat him up, there is not one who would care if he were hanged to-morrow, provided another dignitary would treat them as well."

"And this you told him, too," said De Vere.

"I did," replied Harclai; then suddenly overclouding, and shaking his head, he added, "Yes, let him take his course; and, satisfied himself, lecture others how to bear

> "The whips and scorns of the time, or the spurns
> That patient merit of the unworthy takes."

He said this with emphasis, and yet in a low tone, as if inwardly addressed to himself, and apparently unconscious of our presence. De Vere too became abstracted; and it was his mother alone, who seemed to recollect she was a hostess, and had guests.

"Come," said she, "you are growing churlish, and so I am sure Mr. Beauclerk will think you. I shall, therefore, tell him not to mind you, and, what is worse, to mind Doctor Herbert more, which I know will punish you."

Harclai, awakening from his reverie, replied with a smile, almost sardonic, "No! I can have no rivalry with the president; he

thinks me much too uncouth for his courtly tastes, as well as too ignorant of that world he loves so well."

"Nay," said Lady Eleanor, "I must not let you talk of his love for it, after having given such unexampled proofs of his disinterestedness."

"He has refused a bishopric," observed Harclai.

"Not one, but several," said De Vere, now rousing from his thoughtfulness.

"Well!" continued Harclai, "and what does that prove, but that he does not wish to be a bishop? But has he no other attachment to the world?"

"None, that I know of," answered De Vere, "except that it gives him the happiness of an elegant and useful life, which none of us have a right to undervalue."

"Let him be tried," replied Harclai.

"How?"

"Let the world neglect him, and see what will come of it. No! he has never been tried, for all his *nolo episcopari*. He cannot," added Harclai, rising, on observing Lady Eleanor about to retire, "live in a real hermitage, with poor, simple folk for his companions.

His friends must be amongst the great, or those who want to become so."

"Rather," said Lady Eleanor, "those whom he wishes to make so; for he is always disinterested in his kindness."

"In that," said Harclai, "I agree;" and resuming his friendly countenance, he took Lady Eleanor's offered hand, and said, with an air almost parental, "God bless you, Madam! and peace be to your house."

Lady Eleanor said, after all, he was a good creature; to which he replied, "Why, I ought to be; for, the world you suppose me to abuse, is, I find from my last advices, quite reformed."

"Reformed!"

"Yes; for ministers hate taxes—opposition faction—lawyers litigation, and churchmen intolerance. Nay, wives are grown good; there have not been more than one or two legal proofs to the contrary at each assize town this summer; the opera was bankrupt last winter, and women go to bed at two in the morning. Depend upon it this is too good to last. 'Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.'"

"That will comfort you," said Lady Eleanor, wishing us good night; and Harclai resumed his

seat. The conversation then, on his part, continued of the same saturnine cast; for without scruple or caution at my being a stranger,

> "He railed on lady Fortune in good terms,
> In good set terms,"

and defended himself, when chid by De Vere, pretty much as Jaques did with the Duke, by observing that his complaint was against *all* the world, not of any particular individual in it; "so that," said he, "'my taxing, like a wild goose, flies, unclaimed of any man.'"

When Mr. De Vere afterwards attended me to my room, he thought it necessary to make an apology for the little scene I had witnessed. "We have, I fear, been rudely occupied with ourselves, instead of shewing you the civilities we owe you for so kindly coming among us. But Harclai is no common person here, as you may perceive. He was one of the oldest and best friends of my late father; he loves my mother in all sincerity; and, while one of my trustees jointly with Dr. Herbert, I cannot tell you what I do not owe him myself. From some disappointments, he certainly looks most at the wrong side of the heart; but it is as certain that his own is in the right place. You will find him, indeed, as worthy as he is singular."

This account almost pleased, and certainly interested me, about a man whom I at least had thought extraordinary, if not wild. It only, however, excited my interest the more, for the people about me; though without this, the gentlemanly bearing and good sense of De Vere, the matronly dignity of his mother, and the pleasing strangeness of my whole position in this my new abode, occupied my thoughts long, before I could close them in sleep.

CHAPTER V.

HONOUR.

> One in whom
> The ancient Roman honour more appears,
> Than any that draws breath in Italy.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

I PASS the civilities I received the next day from my host and hostess, and the many quick steps by which, with congenial tempers, persons unknown to each other, advance from good will into a sort of intimacy. There must, however, be a warmth of temperament, and even of imagination, to bring congeniality always to bear. Icicles may be frozen together, and seem apparently linked; but it is the warm sun which melts and amalgamates correspondent natures, so that they run into one another, and appear individually the same. Congeniality of feeling is often as sudden in its effects as it is unaccountable. All that we know of it is, that it is a delight which ages of intimacy, and even the nearest relationship, cannot always purchase;

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

and those are wrong who from wariness, or I had almost said, from experience, are afraid to indulge it. Thus spoke my own young heart. If De Vere's was not immediately responsive to it, perhaps he may be forgiven.

Both himself and his mother, however, considering their habits, did wonders. Lady Eleanor made me tell all I knew of my father, and the campaigns he had served "with him who was gone."

She did this while we lingered alone together in the great dining-room, the morning after I arrived. She did it, too, with her eyes fixed upon the marked and fine portrait I had observed the evening before. There was a high military air in it; an erect crest, and lofty look of rectitude, which fixed the sentiment as the colours did the eye.

I was moved, and shewed that I was so. Lady Eleanor was pleased, for she did not shrink from the subject; she rather indulged it. No tear came into her eye while it passed over the well-known features; but her lips, spite of herself, quivered when she began to speak of them.

"I see all you think," said she, "of this fine resemblance, for such it is. The character of it cannot be mistaken. Never was gentleman

more truly stamped, than on that noble brow!"

She said this with clasped hands, and an elevated voice. My silent observance shewed how I respected her. But she checked herself with a command that was evidently habitual, and we conversed calmly on the topics which the portrait prompted, although there was fire and destruction in all its accompaniments; and General De Vere, as I afterwards discovered, had died the death of a soldier. When I tell my reader that my own father had also died his companion in arms in the same battle, he may understand the suddenness of the sympathy which sprang up between this interesting family and me, and the sort of favour into which I seemed so immediately taken by this excellent woman.

In truth, the Lady Eleanor De Vere was a noble gentlewoman. Though little smiled upon by fortune, she was intrenched, if I may so say, in respectability of every kind. She possessed little of the smooth, level, and uniform varnish of untried character, which belongs to most of the women of quality of the present day. She belonged rather to other times. Sprung from a long line of nobles, through both her parents, she traced to the Albinis and Plantagenets, and

her ancestors had called cousin with a king. This had in fact never been forgotten, although it had often to struggle with changes, which had both tried and purified her mind.

Through one of the sources of her being, she derived from the Cliffords, and though with infinitely more mildness, she was not ill qualified (had she been pushed to it,) to have imitated her famous ancestor, the threefold Countess of Dorset, Pembroke, and Montgomery, in her answer to a secretary of state: "I have been bullied by an usurper, I have been neglected by a court; but I will not be dictated to by a subject."*

If from this introduction, the reader loves the Lady Eleanor de Vere, as well as I do, he will perhaps excuse me, if I go on with this sketch; nor perhaps can there be a more convenient time for it, than at this epoch of our acquaintance.

Lady Eleanor, then, was the daughter of a nobleman of some parliamentary influence in this division of the kingdom. This influence he generally exerted for the court, and reaped

* Her answer to Sir Jos. Williamson, who had written to her to nominate a court candidate for Appleby. She added, "your man shan't stand."

from it the usual benefits which the court conferred in return. The daughter, however, and the father, saw things differently, and Lady Eleanor, while she could not oppose, dared secretly to lament that the descendant of an hundred barons should be content to pass a life in mere parliamentary manœuvring, sometimes with the minister himself, but more frequently with subalterns, in support of his power. As arbitrary in his family as obsequious at the treasury, the Earl of Mowbray could not brook the dissent of his child from his proceedings. What was worse, he could not bear the superiority of her character. Her presence, her observation, though mute, became irksome; and her perpetual praises of the heroes and patriots of his own blood, who were gone, were so many crimes in his eyes,—so many taunts upon what he feared she might think (for she never expressed it) his degenerate conduct.

Under such restraints, she lost the little affection he had ever entertained for her; and he seized with readiness, if not with pleasure, the occasion of what he called an undutiful opposition to his will, in refusing a high alliance, to banish her from his house, as he had previously from his heart. It was in vain that she ventured to

assert, not her power of choice, but her liberty to refuse; and to offer, as a composition, never to marry but with his entire approbation. Yet in this she was ready to sacrifice much, for another had then touched her young affection. But the Earl was inexorable; and exiled, portionless, but as unsubdued as beautiful, she thought no duty prevented her from bestowing herself upon one who loved her too well to balance between his prudence, and what he thought affection and honour conjoined. Her union with Colonel De Vere was, as far as union was concerned, of the happiest kind. A descent equal to her own, a spirit which, in other times, had been chivalrous, a lofty contempt for all that was selfish, proved by a regard for family honour, which had comparatively ruined him, commanded her admiration, while the most entire and delicate devotion to herself, sealed her love. The return she made for it was ardent, and kept them always lovers.

The conduct of Colonel De Vere in his family story was remarkable. His father, an able but profuse man, in the course of various splendid foreign missions, had contracted debts to an immense amount. Though employed by, and not averse to the government, he could not prevail

upon his son, who was in parliament on their own family interest, to give them his support. A dependent friend, then making his way in the career of office, hinted the propriety of a change in politics, with a view to the allowance of many of these debts. It was spurned at.

"Let my father's mind be easy," said De Vere; "if breaking an entail will pay the demands, I am ready to sign, but let us preserve our independence."

The father balanced—"It will strip you," said he, "of your finest inheritance, and reduce you to the moated house."

"I will live, then," replied Colonel De Vere, "in the moated house."

The parent was struck, but would not consent; at least he hesitated, and hesitating, died. Creditors, to the amount of eighty thousand pounds, remained to curse his memory.

It was hard upon De Vere: but loftiness of spirit (for I will not call it pride), added to principle, directed him to a noble course. He had promised to break the entail, a promise which his friends told him was released, because not accepted by his father.

"My promise was virtually to the creditors," said De Vere. In fine, the most considerable

estate was sold; the debts were paid, and De Vere retired, as he said he would, to the moated house and comparative poverty. It was shared by Lady Eleanor with cheerfulness, and while she felt the eclipse of her husband, as well as of herself, her admiration as well as approbation were unceasing at the generosity that had caused it.

But the alienation of her father preyed upon her heart. She made many efforts to be restored, but in vain; and, sad to relate, the cold and calculating earl, though, as his eyes were closing, he sent her a faint forgiveness, left the world without having admitted her to his presence.

Providence had even greater trials for her. The Colonel, now General De Vere, fell in battle, mortally wounded. Lady Eleanor, the moment she heard of it flew to the Continent to attend him, but only arrived time enough to see him die.

There is no necessity to pursue the story. Several years had elapsed since that disastrous event, but it was only her firmness, supported by sincere resignation, that enabled her to resume comparative enjoyment. She was left with two sons of very unequal ages, and had now still

more straightened circumstances to encounter: for the estate of Talbois, which devolved to her eldest son, little more than sufficed to educate and give him the accomplishments that seemed his birthright.

This she could have borne; but the character of that eldest son, which she had carefully concealed from his father, who, in his occupations abroad, knew it not, gave her the greatest uneasiness.

In Mortimer, however, she had all comfort; in him she seemed to see his father revived. He had all his parent's high qualities; more than his cultivation; even greater beauty of person; and having fallen from no high expectations, was naturally buoyant. He had, however, one great fault—such at least it was under his peculiar circumstances: he possessed a warm and even enthusiastic imagination, which often ran away with him, and, falling upon a spirit hereditarily independent, influenced, as we shall see, the whole cast of his life.

The person now of most consequence to Lady Eleanor, next her children, was her brother. It was not that her affection had been much exercised towards him. Their long and distant separation, the total difference of their lives and

characters, and the little correspondence they had consequently preserved, prevented it. While she had been sequestered at the moated house, the new Earl of Mowbray had followed his idol, political ambition, in the only places where that sort of ambition can be worshipped: in courts, in senates, and among official deities. To office he had been dedicated by his father, from his youth, and up the ladder of office he had climbed from the lowest round consistent with his rank, till now within a few steps of the top, he had been recently placed at the head of an extensive and important department.

It may be thought from this, that Lord Mowbray was a highly gifted person; a man of genius, of eloquence, of penetrating abilities, of commanding talents; at least that he had great public principles of policy, which carried with them a numerous and powerful train of followers, and of which he was the inflexible representative; at any rate, that he was distinguished by the favour of the crown.

He was none of these. In truth, it is not always that these qualifications, even in this country, still less in others, are necessary to make a minister of the third or fourth order, such as Lord Mowbray.

Great obsequiousness to the will of the King; greater still to the will of the *Premier;* (obsequiousness amounting to the most absolute resignation of opinion;) the usages, or, if I may so say, the solemnities of office; perhaps the very absence of those talents which bring forward other men, but which also bring along with them jealousy and trouble; these, at particular periods, (especially if there is rank and parliamentary influence, and the times are not stormy,) are sometimes as successful as a far other description of character, in placing a man at the head of a department, though not at the head of affairs.

The period we speak of, was such a one as we have marked. There were already in the council, and particularly in the House of Commons, men of the first abilities and reputation in the empire. Some were unrivalled in eloquence; some in knowledge of political economy; some conciliating; some commanding; united, they were irresistible. The government could afford to have one common-place minister among them, and Lord Mowbray had all the qualifications I have enumerated to be that one.

At the same time there was a part of his character which, for the undeviating consistency as

well as energy that he displayed in it, entitled him to all respect. This was his notion of what he called political discipline. As, throughout his career, he had acted upon a principle amounting to sacred, of unqualified obedience to all who were above him; so even in his first advances, he exacted, to the letter, from his official inferiors, all that he himself had paid to those above him. A subaltern in office, he used to hold, could have no opinion but that of his chief; a member of parliament none but that of his party; and any show of deviation from these duties was treated by him as treason, and, as such, held in abhorrence.

These, and other such maxims, were laid down by him in a manner little less than oracular; they were paramount to all others in his notions of government; indeed, they were almost the only notions of government which he possessed; for as to all great views of policy, foreign or domestic, he left them to those whom he at the time supported; satisfied, himself, with supporting them.

This little sketch of one of the greatest personages of our history, is inserted, perhaps, not quite in its regular order in this place, yet

it probably may not be amiss that the reader should understand as soon as possible the characters which I have undertaken to introduce to him.

CHAPTER VI.

A DIGNITARY.

That churchman bears a bounteous mind indeed.
SHAKSPEARE.

The arrival of Dr. Herbert, Prebendary of ——, and President of —— College, Oxford, put an end to my conference with Lady Eleanor.

From Harclai's account of him, I might have expected to see a smooth, silken, rosy-gilled minion, who had basked into an unmeaning manner and physiognomy, in the sunshine of the church. It was not so. As he descended from his carriage, I perceived at once a man of decided mien, and one who combined much thought with knowledge of the world. Such his air and self-possession bespoke, almost at the first glance. I observed, that though he had that bearing of command which consciousness of power in the head of a house in so great an university, always generates, he addressed

himself to Lady Eleanor with most affectionate politeness, I might almost say reverence. At the same time, his courtesy was so polished as to make it evident he had learned it

> "In tapestry halls
> And courts of princes, where it first was named."

Though I was of the sister university, I had, indeed, wondered at Harclai's mention of him, for I was no stranger to his high reputation, both as a scholar, and the governor of a college. I knew how many great ones owed much of their distinction, even in politics, to his superintendence in the cloister, and his advice afterwards in the world. I knew, too, how much he was consulted in the highest quarters, on the government of the church, and the disposal of dignities, many of which, as has been said, he had refused for himself. If this was ambition, it was of a sort which few practised, and which Lord Mowbray said he never could understand.

From all these considerations, I had conceived the highest respect for him, notwithstanding Harclai's attempt at sarcasm the night before; and as a young man, I regarded him, on his arrival, with a sort of awe. This made me more observant of De Vere's address to him,

which, though of mixed affection and respect, preserved all that internal independence and decision, for which I then, as I have ever since, admired him.

I was introduced to Dr. Herbert by both Lady Eleanor and her son, as a person whom, for the sake of those who were no more, they were disposed to value. I received a corresponding reception from him, and he seemed to search me through with a pair of small, but very vivid black eyes, as he shook my hand. With the sentiment as well as the superiority of manner acquired by so much mingling of himself with youth, he said, with a smile, mixed perhaps with a little pomp and protection, "I am always happy to make acquaintance with such a countenance, at such an age. It does one's own age good, to see painted in plain characters, what has been called 'the confidence with which youth rushes abroad to take possession of the world.'"

In another person I might have thought this affected, almost impertinent; but uttered from a mouth of authority, with an air of great self-possession, and by a commanding figure, cloathed in a silk cassock, and the dignitary's hat, it seemed to me little less than patriarchal.

Lady Eleanor, however, who heard the

speech, could not help saying, "The President must take care how he talks of the world to Mr. Beauclerk, for Mr. Harclai has been beforehand with him."

"Is Harclai here, then?" asked Dr. Herbert, with something like a check; "I saw no sign of him, not even his dog."

"I dare say," observed De Vere, "if you will look for him in the oak grove, you will find him—

'Under a tree, like a dropt acorn.'"

"Of course I must go on with the passage," said the President, laughing, "'It may well be called Jove's tree, when it dropt forth such fruit.' They say he is more bitter than ever."

"There is, however, worth in his bitterness," said Lady Eleanor, "and I really believe he only abuses the world, because he loves the human species."

"For human species," replied the President, "I would read individuals. But, in truth, he knows nothing really about the world he abuses; he is too indiscriminating for an oracle: and after all, I believe mere pique at some disappointments, weaving itself in with his romantic notions, (not worn out at sixty) makes him the recluse he is: and this he calls philosophy."

This was uttered with a high authoritative air, and I lost not a word of it.

"However," added the doctor, "though beloved, and I verily believe deservedly, in this house, I do not conceive him to be a model even here; for, my good friend, I know, always thinks and acts for himself."

"I am afraid," cried De Vere, "something more is implied in this, than your politeness allows you to disclose. I am afraid you have thought, and still think me a very obstinate fellow."

"I *shall* perhaps think you so," replied Dr. Herbert, "if you treat what I am in fact charged with, with your former disdain;" then pressing his arm, in a manner that denoted real regard, mixed with a wish to insure a favourable hearing, he begged to be allowed to take a walk with him by the bank of the canal.

"Perhaps," said De Vere, laughing, but rather to disguise his wonder at the President's address, "we shall find Mr. Harclai there; for, from the wildness and total neglect of the place, it is his favourite haunt. I often find him lying at length, among the weeds with which it is overrun; and, besides, it gives him his favourite amusement of seeing Triton duck himself."

"We will duck Harclai too, if we find him," said the President, adopting the laughing tone of De Vere, in effect to give a lighter air, as least inconvenient to his carrying him off.

Lady Eleanor looked her surprise; but veiling curiosity with her natural self-command, she said, as they went out, "Dr. Herbert, I shall of course see you as soon as you return?" to which the President replied, bowing very low, that not to do so, would be a solecism in good breeding as well as friendship.

I now found myself in a situation not too agreeable; that of feeling one is *de trop* in company; and, to relieve my own awkwardness, as well as Lady Eleanor, I said I would endeavour to find out Mr. Harclai, whose manner and conversation, I observed, were at least very interesting: and Lady Eleanor assenting, I sallied forth at random, only taking care not to go near the canal.

In truth, my excuse to Lady Eleanor was not merely a cover; for I really wished once more to encounter a character that seemed to furnish so much food for observation.

CHAPTER VII.

CYNICAL.

> I love to cope him in these sullen fits,
> For then he's full of matter.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

> They say you are a melancholy fellow.
> I am so; I do love it better than laughing.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

I FOUND the object of my search not exactly as De Vere had prognosticated, "like a dropt acorn," but sitting on a little camp-stool, (without which he seldom walked abroad) under the statue of Julius Cæsar.

This master of the world, and at one time of all the spirits in it, except "the lean and hungry Cassius," frowned from his pedestal with a most imperial air, at the end of a retired walk of chestnuts.

Our philosopher was occupied with the very play which bears his name, and on which he was so intent that he scarcely minded the inward growling of Triton, who lay curled round with

his head enveloped in his bushy tail, leaving room only for one eye to open, which glared upon me as I approached.

This, and my footsteps, at length roused Mr. Harclai, who received me, as I thought, with no pleasure at being disturbed. I made a lame sort of an excuse for breaking in upon him, informing him of the arrival of Dr. Herbert, who had carried off Mr. De Vere, and left me to my fortune.

"And a good fortune too," said Harclai, "if he left you to yourself;" and his eye glanced again on the book from which he had raised it.

A bad beginning, thought I, for my wished conversation; but, perceiving the study that occupied him, I could not help observing upon the appropriate spot he had chosen for the perusal of this great effort of genius.

"Which is your favourite character in it?" asked he carelessly.

I readily answered, "Cassius."

"I should have thought Antony," said he, in the same tone of indifference.

"Why?"

"Because you are no doubt one of those that sleep o'nights, and love plays, and hear music,

as Antony did. One, who from your age, of course think the world is all before you where to choose. So thought De Vere. Yet he is changed, though not a great deal older than you."

Interested about all that concerned my new friend, I seized upon this with avidity, hoping it might be a commencement of what I wished much to know. I soon found, however, that there was no chance of my obtaining the history of the engaging people among whom I had so strangely fallen; for old Harclai had again betaken himself to his book, and seemed reading to himself with a peculiar sort of pleasure.

Willing yet to try at conversation, I ventured once more, and said, "I wonder if our thoughts are the same as to the most striking passages of this fine play?"

"And pray, young gentleman," asked he, "what are yours?"

"They are," I returned, "not so much the usual grand passages in the character of Brutus, and the stirring up of the people by Antony, as those exquisite touches of a decided proud and mighty spirit in Cassius, which led him to hate himself, for being 'in awe' of such a thing as he himself."

"Good," said Harclai.

"Which induced him also," I continued, "while other men slunk with terror from a portentous night, when

> 'The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
> Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets,'

to court it, as he says, 'unbraced,

> 'And bare his bosom to the thunder stone.'"

"Good, again," said Harclai, fixing his eye upon me. "And why did he do this?"

"Because," continued I, "it was a night that suited those who 'knew the world so full of faults,' and he hoped for the downfall of pride and usurping ambition."

Having said this with some emphasis, I was pleased to find it operated in my favour with the old gentleman.

"Do you know," said he, closing the book, "that this is exactly my own feeling? Do you know, too, I never expected this—I thought you had been a mere cockered, common-place spirit; one of the glozers of the world, who do as they are bid, 'and bend the crooked pageant of the knee, where thrift may follow fawning.' But if instead of being a hypocrite—a disciple of the vil-

lain Chesterfield—all things to all men, (as all men almost are, and therefore, perhaps *you*)—you are made of higher mettle—you are one who will suit Mortimer, though, I fear, not Dr. Herbert."

I told him I was flattered with his observation, and especially as it named me in the same breath with Mr. De Vere, of whom I had conceived the highest opinion.

"You shew no ill judgment," he returned, "though so young. Mortimer is a man who, as well as Arbuthnot, would have made Swift burn his travels. As you fell in with him so lately, you can hardly, I think, know much of his life, still less of his character, otherwise I should ask,

> 'Wherefore do you look
> Upon that poor and broken bankrupt there?'

Depend upon it, if you wish advancement, he can never serve you; nay, I question if his intimacy would not stop your rise at court, if such is your aim."—He said this so drily, and his eyelids vibrated, and his lip curled so violently, that I almost resented it, and felt a little angry. I contented myself, however, with replying, I had no such object, but at the same time, could not help wondering at his observa-

tion: as from his apparent principles and known high connections, I could discover nothing in regard to De Vere that did not tend to the contrary. He smiled, but in bitterness, yet not wholly unmixed with something like the kindness of protection.

"What I mean, is," continued he, perceiving I waited for some explanation, "that had our friend been less generous, and more pliable, or had he had more suspicion, and less independence, he would have been a very different person from the mere country gentleman he is at present. We shall see, however, what his courtly adviser will do to bribe him back from his silly notions; for much I mistake if he is not now reading him an admirable lesson upon the reasonableness of slavery in the world. But take my word for it he will not succeed—unless, indeed, he bring a woman in his hand."

Taking him *à la lettre*, I assured him no lady had arrived with Dr. Herbert.

"Pooh!" said the old man, with something like fretfulness, "thou art but a moonish youth after all," and he seemed walking away.

Not willing to lose him, I followed, and, as civilly as I could, apologized for breaking in upon his solitude; adding, that if my presence

was inconvenient, I would seek another walk, and wander alone.

"Don't go," said he; "stay at least till you see how this experiment turns out. You may get a lesson upon the art of rising at court, and profit better than poor De Vere, who was always stupid at it. But why do I call him poor and stupid? He was my own boy before he wrote man; and now he is a man, such as I would have him. But he could not be otherwise with such a father and mother. You have heard of his father?"

I said I had, as a gallant soldier who had given his life to his country, but no more.

"Then you may learn," replied he; "and yet," (and here his smile became most sardonic indeed) "he was a mere fool in his generation, unlike all other men, and could not show his face either in court or city, I'll answer for it."

"You move my curiosity," said I.

"Why, he married a woman just as she was turned out of doors, without a sixpence, merely because he loved her before she was disinherited; and he afterwards ruined his fortune to pay his father's debts, merely because he had promised to do so. What was worse still they might

possibly have been paid for him if he had only changed sides in politics. Now out upon such a blockhead!"

Here the old man could scarcely contain himself, and laughed outright.

"No, no!" continued he, "do not stay. This is a bad air—get out of it as fast as you can."

I became more and more interested, and after a few questions, his love for the memory of the General and his family, made him relate not only what I have told of their history, but many other traits of De Vere himself, which I treasured up as accurately, as I listened to them greedily.

"Come," said he, in good humour, perceiving that I sincerely admired his friends; "after all, you shall not go. You seem to have stuff in you, and perhaps I may like you, and may tell you De Vere's story; and then you may know what I meant by the President's bringing a woman in his hand; which you, matter of fact as you are, thought the same as bringing her in a post-chaise. Herbert would not venture upon that. Yet I question if he is not making use of a woman in his present efforts, as much as if he had brought her literally in his hand."

Here the humorist (for such I own I now began to think him) quickened his pace, looking now and then over his shoulder towards the canal, and rather watching the effect which this last intimation had on me.

I confess I was so prepossessed with contrary notions of the dignified ecclesiastic I had seen, that I could not go along with my informant in this account, and fairly told him so.

"Live," said he, "and know better; and for this purpose go yourself to the court, or the minister's *levee*; sacrifice yourself to fortune, and think it happiness to bask in the smile of a man like yourself. Do this, and you will find Dr. Herbert commend you."

"Impossible," said I, "even could I do so; which——"

"Is *equally* impossible no doubt," interrupted the railer, with a sneer. "But tell me, for you seem *ingenui vultus*, (but for which, mark me, I do not trust you a whit the more) what is your own ambition?"

"My father," replied I, "was a soldier."

"Is it arms, then?" said he with quickness, "do you wish to be a legal murderer?"

"It is too late, even if I did," rejoined I, not minding his false inference.

"Good!" said he, "you will not cut a throat to humour a crowned head, or at the mandate of a cold-blooded, calculating, quill-driving clerk, who, with a stroke of his pen, signs the death-warrant of a whole race, spreads fire and destruction over an entire region of plenty and happiness, and then goes home to dinner and to sleep. Oh, power! power! how art thou abused, and how true is it said of thee that thou makest the angels weep!"

"Surely," said I, struck with his emphasis, "this must be exaggerated. Could there be such a cold-blooded minister, no generous soldier would be his instrument."

"I tell thee again," returned he, "thou art but a moonish youth. I could come near home, but what do you think of Louvois and Turenne? Yet Louvois's master was then almost *dévote*, and Turenne himself '*faisait honneur à l'homme.*' Such is the hypocritical dress which lying history gives to this gull of a world!"

I am ashamed to say I felt awed, though aware of the fallacy. I at least was silent.

"Well," said he, "your next move? To the church with Herbert, or to the court with Clayton?"

"I have neither learning nor interest," said

I, "sufficient to encourage me; and as for Clayton, I know not who he is."

"I cry you mercy," said he; "I thought 'not to know him, argued thyself unknown.' Learn, then, that Mr. Clayton is a skilful gentleman who never let slip an opportunity of showing the nonsense of supposing that either talents, or eloquence, or birth, or original interest, or even great industry, or agreeable qualities, or suavity, or dignity of manners, are at all necessary for rising to the first honours and proportionate wealth. Even Dr. Herbert holds up his hands at his rise, and tells you the only situation for which he is fitted by nature."

"And what is that?" asked I, with excited curiosity.

"Tuft-hunting," replied he, "and tale-bearing between men of quality and office. This, and a smooth face, be assured are all that he has found necessary to rise. But no, I do him wrong. His talents are of a sublimer kind; he has a knowledge of human nature far deeper than I have in my injustice stated; which makes Dr. Herbert's account shallow and superficial. Yes, yes, I have done wrong."

Here he quickened his pace, and I followed him, more than ever desirous of eliciting infor-

mation from him concerning De Vere and his friends. But I had a delicate part to play. I scarcely knew my host, still less my present companion. I had much way to make with every body before I could be in a situation to aspire to the confidence I wished. Harclai might give it if he pleased, but I felt I must wait his time, and at present he was not in the vein; for throwing himself into a covered seat, he opened his book again, while Triton rolled himself as usual at his feet, and he rather abruptly cried out,

"Good morrow, we shall perhaps meet at dinner, though I want to go home; but this churchman's visit may detain me. If I am wanted, which is possible, pray tell Lady Eleanor I am here watching an epitome of the world."

At these words, I found his quick eye had fixed upon a corner of the seat, where there was an immense spider's web, the tyrant of which lay coiled up, ready to sally out and strike his fangs into any straggler that should come within his reach.

"Look at that rascal," said he, "how harmless and quiet he appears. How many poor dupes may be presently his victims, unless I crush

him! Yet why should I? He is not human, and if he were,—but why should I moralize, when here is one who will do it so much better?" and he opened his volume at Timon of Athens. Rather shocked, and yet respecting his wish to be alone, I did not press him farther; but left him, full of wonder and curiosity about himself, Herbert, De Vere, and all the seeming mysteries with which I thought myself surrounded.

CHAPTER VIII.

A CONTRAST.

I'll teach you differences.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE walk and conversation by the canal, lasted longer than mine with Harclai. I relate not their result here, because it will come in better in another place. At present, I wish merely to introduce to the reader my new friends, among whom I was persuaded to remain many weeks. In short, I passed much time in the precincts of Talbois. I was invited to Dr. Herbert's, where I spent many days at a time, in a manner and in conversation which gave me great delight. The President was full of knowledge, natural and acquired. His abilities were of the first cast. Shrewd and observing, as well as learned, he knew, but by no means hated the world; and when cultivated with sincerity, as he was by me, no one could be more open, or impart himself with greater facility. A little

pomp perhaps, a little pride, in having from personal merit alone achieved that which the highest dignities, and even power, cannot always effect for other men, would peep out amidst his confidences. But Harclai also had pride, and the pride of both seemed pardonable. What struck me, however, was that the President inveighed against the pride of De Vere; lamented that so fine a mind, with such elegant cultivation, and supported by such general ability, should all be marred, together with the hopes of advancement, (which from the inferiority of his fortune to his rank, was very necessary to him,) by a proud nature, rendered prouder by that very inferiority. "His own native dignity," said the President, "is so great, that he can afford to unbend a little, and yet preserve independence sufficient to carry an ordinary man through the world with honour. But, to my great vexation, who love him so much, he adds to it a morbid sensibility which has only increased his mistakes; and, what is not least, a spirit of romance which makes it more difficult to cure them."

In the course of our communication, the President gave me his proofs of this: to which he was encouraged, he said, by the confidence which De Vere had reposed in me himself, and,

as he was pleased to add, that I might not throw myself away at every little temporary disgust with a world which, after all, said he, we were made for, with all its faults.

Young (and perhaps romantic) as I was, I own this seemed no more than the language of good sense. From the President's lips, it also seemed the language of fair experience, avoiding the extremes of an enthusiast, which he certainly was not. For though embowered, if I may so say, in the quiet and learned retreats of Oxford, of which he was the ornament, he had been long in the world, and was even now by no means out of it. The difference was, that the men of the world now came to *him*; whereas, before, he lived in the midst of *them*, a distinction by no means unremarked, or unpleasing to this practical observer of mankind.

How great a contrast to this was Harclai! He had not the deeper learning of the President, though he had much even of that, having turned a long leisure to account by study. But he confessed it was useless, except as far as books described men. Hence the satirists of Rome and of modern times, Horace, Juvenal, Boileau, and Pope; and the more just observers of mankind, as Shakspeare and Montaigne, were

now his only authors, and of these he could make copious use. He would have included Swift, but that he had early, he said, detected him in the very hypocrisy he railed against: and unmasked the most enslaved of courtiers in the would-be despiser of courts. Unfortunately, this penetrating shrewdness in seizing the weak and vicious side of things, was sufficiently, he thought, supported by experience, to make him not merely a theorist.

He was of an ancient family and fair fortune; but for which last, he would perhaps have pursued the bar, after he had assumed its gown. His rank in life gave him access to the great, particularly in the country where he was known; but a natural plainness of manner, and indifference to what might be thought of him, made him little welcome in high society. It occasioned the first great wound his feelings sustained.

He had a brother left wholly dependant upon him, whom he got placed about the court. This brother, as much his opposite in personal graces as mental merit, implored his assistance to enable him to marry the daughter of a nobleman supposed to be rising in court favour. He imme-

diately settled upon him a considerable part of his fortune. But the lady was fine, and the brother ungrateful. Harclai's plainness and sincerity were disagreeable to his sister-in-law's family; he was neglected, and even ridiculed by those whom his bounty had made happy; and he left their house, like another Lear. His disgust was interminable, and his affections for ever bruised.

A kinsman now consulted him in the choice of a wife. Harclai had known the lady from her cradle, and approved with all his heart.

Within the first year she eloped; and the husband, attended by Harclai, called the seducer to the field. But he there fell himself: and, as was said, the adultress beheld the combat. The seducer afterwards was promoted in the army, and rose to a great post in the state; and the adultress, again married, became the centre of fashion.

A thousand instances, as he said, had met his observation of principles renounced, benefits forgotten, and friends unremembered. But what roused his disgust more than any thing else, was an affront to his honour, which he said he should resent upon mankind to his dying day.

Political animosity had long divided his county, and from confidence in his integrity he was pitched upon by the leaders of both parties to negotiate an approximation. He felt this the most glorious situation in which a private man could be placed. He succeeded; and, for a while he was honoured with the title of peace-maker, which he would not have exchanged to be a duke. But the parties quarrelled, and each reproached the other with a breach of terms. Appeal was made to Harclai, as the only witness. He stated the facts, and was disavowed by both. As he was devoted to plain dealing, the wound thus inflicted was never cured. He despised his fellow-creatures in a mass, but particularly politicians, and people of his own rank; for unhappily he staid not to look at the other side of the account, where he might have found a great and happy balance in their favour.

He had yet one comfort left; his friendship for General De Vere and his wife, who alone satisfied his expectations, and exercised the little remnant of his attachments.

Such was Harclai, whom, mistaken as he was, I could not help respecting, nay, almost loving; for the proofs he dealt out with large hand of

kindness to the poor, and assistance to the helpless in every situation. Nevertheless I loved not his manners as I did those of the President. Such is the invariable effect of real good breeding and elegant cultivation, in comparison with bluntness, wherever found. Harclai, however, told me most about De Vere.

As to De Vere himself, I found him so full of rich mind; and though, at first, from circumstances, reserved, yet so free and communicative in the end; and, at the same time, he communicated himself with so much delicacy, and where I thought him romantic, had so much seeming reason for his romance, that I felt my attachment as well as my pleasure in his society grow every hour.

There were other ladies in his history besides his mother. But why do I hint, when a whole life's intimacy with all those I have mentioned, and the freest access to papers and letters, gave me a distinct view of the life of De Vere; in which I discovered many interesting vicissitudes, and a mind often acting under the extreme of feeling, but in its feeling always honourable. As I have said, then, can I please myself more, or do better for others, than to give a picture of

this life, and this mind, to the world? I therefore proceed to do so; and, henceforward, the reader is to consider me no longer as an actor on the scene, but as a faithful biographer, whom he may trust as if it were my own life I was recording.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ADVERSITIES OF CHILDHOOD.

As I remember, Adam, it was upon this fashion bequeathed me, by will but a poor thousand crowns: and, as thou say'st, charg'd my brother on his blessing, to breed me well, and there begins my sadness. For call you that keeping for a gentleman of my birth, that differs not from the stalling of an ox?

SHAKSPEARE.

I WOULD pass the earlier life of De Vere, but that part of it was spent in comparative adversity, occasioning a development of character, which it probably would otherwise have wanted.

It has been stated, that on the death of her husband, Lady Eleanor was left with two sons, De Vere, and a brother much older. This, and the will of his father founded upon it, chequered his lot for years.

It was the will of a soldier, "whose business 'tis to die." For it was short, made in a camp, and made by himself. With the real character of his eldest son, he was, from various circumstances, quite unacquainted. For the General had passed several years in arms, at a distance

from home, and his heir had been for some time before, taken off his hands by his brother in law, Lord Mowbray. What wonder then, if he did not know him? Had he done so, or had Lady Eleanor brought herself to confess her opinion of him, he would never have left things as he did.

The estate, indeed, of Talbois, and the Borough possessions, were entailed on his children, for whom Dr. Herbert and Harclai were trustees; but the portion of the younger son was but five hundred pounds, with the General's commendation to the elder, to give him the breeding of a gentleman, and ever to afford him his support and protection. The General knew not what he did.

It is scarcely possible to conceive two characters so much in contrast as those of the two De Veres. The one, cold, calculating, and close; proud, but without dignity; ambitious, but indifferent to public opinion; to his inferiors, a tyrant, to his superiors, a slave. The other, warm, nay, enthusiastic, particularly in his admiration of nature; and little mindful of consequences when his feelings were concerned. Yet though high minded and high principled, he was aspiring rather than ambitious; open from dis-

position, but forced by situation into reserve. The elder was harsh, greedy, and overbearing; qualities of which his brother seemed both the object and the victim; the younger, generous and mild, except when oppressed, when he could assume an attitude which few could resist.

The disparity of years, however, at first gave the elder an advantage over the younger, which he cruelly abused, by leaving him in the total want of every thing that befitted a gentleman's son. Whether as to education, the comforts, or almost even the necessaries of life, Mortimer was equally destitute. He was separated from his mother, and confined to the moated house, whither his brother seldom came, and where he was left to such society as the children of the neighbouring farmers could supply. These, though at an age when we are seldom nice as to our associates, he avoided; for he remembered the station he had been in, and, child as he was, felt himself a De Vere.

It was this that made him feelingly alive to those other privations to which he was condemned, particularly in regard to instruction, and something even with respect to outward appearances.

It is difficult to account for this conduct in his brother, on the score of avarice alone, though

that would go far. But the elder De Vere was peculiarly excited against the younger, from two causes; partly from dislike to his mother, who knew, and had not concealed from him her opinion of his own character, and who had shewn a decided preference to this worthier scion of her noble stock; but, chiefly, from his never ending blame of his father, for his romantic folly, as he called it, in paying his grandfather's debts, by which his own consequence and fortune had been so sensibly diminished. The bequest of a younger brother to his care and maintenance, was a fresh invasion, as he thought, of his rights, all proceeding from the same silly generosity of feeling: and, as the boy seemed rebellious and gloomy, he resolved to curb him, and gratify his spleen against his father at the same time.

It was a treatment, however, to which, as he grew up, Mortimer could less and less submit. His sense of it was sharpened by the knowledge which he had acquired (more than by tradition) of the former greatness of the De Veres. Fond of inquiry, even as a child, he had a natural turn for reading, which was only limited by the paucity of his then resources. But English history lay in abundance before him in the

library; and the puissant De Veres figured with such power and brilliancy, in the earlier part of it, as to engage all his attention. This was heightened even to devotion by a large and illuminated manuscript, which his research had discovered on neglected shelves, in which the family history had been blazoned. Here, besides a long line of Norman heroes, he found that Edward, Earl of Oxford, who, in the days of Elizabeth, united in his single person, the character of her greatest noble, knight, and poet.

This was that Earl who set his own father-in-law, the all-powerful Burleigh, at such brave defiance on a point of honour,* and of whom it was recorded, that he scarcely ever moved from Castle Hedingham to London without eighty liveried retainers in his train. Here, also, he found the memorable Sir Francis; and the boy, with a swelling heart, read in the words of Sir Robert Naunton, describing this eminent person, "that it might be a question whether the nobility of his house, or the honour of his achievements, might most commend him. I find not," said Sir Robert, "that he came much to court, but when he did, no man had more of the Queen's favour,

* See Chap. II., page 22.

and none less envied, for he seldom troubled it with the jealousie and allarum of supplantations; *his underminings were of another kind.* They report, that the Queen, as she loved martial men, would court this gentleman as soon as he appeared in her presence."

This account excited Mortimer's sympathy and admiration, to a degree that was undefinable, even to himself; as did the following passage in one of Sir Francis's own letters. "I went to court, *and because I would use nobodie's help to give me access to her majesty,* I resolved to shew myself," et cætera. This, and the honourable inference drawn from the passage quoted, "*his underminings were of another kind,*" made a lasting impression on the young heart of Mortimer, and influenced his character in after times.

But he thought of the neglect of his education with grief, and of all his other privations with indignation, till at last, like another Orlando, he broke out against his tyrant, in one of the few visits which the latter paid to the moated house.

"I care not," said he to his brother, in a tone of lofty anger, "that you do not, nay, that you cannot love me. That I might bear, but I wonder your own blood does not cry out upon

you, for leaving your father's son, a De Vere as well as yourself, no better, in all that belongs to a gentleman's instruction, than your hinde, or gamekeeper."

"And am I bound to do more?" would his brother reply, "or have you fortune to pretend to more, that you thus rebel? If you have, the doors are open; go: and see what the name of De Vere will do for you."

Such was sometimes the mildest treatment which Mortimer met with from the heir of his father, who, busy in pushing his fortune under his uncle, Lord Mowbray, did not condescend to think much of a younger brother.

The youth thus repressed, could only fly gloomily to the woods and solitudes that surrounded his paternal house. For he had no friend of his own age, or condition, to whom he could unburthen his o'erfraught heart. It was hence, however, that he imbibed that taste for the beauties of nature, as well as that contemplative habit and reserve, but above all that feeling of independence, which, added to other accidents, ever after distinguished him. Sometimes, indeed, he betook himself to Harclai, who gave him what consolation he could, whether by advice or instruction, for, as he said, "he loved

the boy." But the boy, though fond of his conversation, with all its uncouthness, had, even before this, felt scruples in taxing his time so much as his regular instruction required, and Harclai himself perceived, that a more regular tutorage was necessary to do justice to his desire of improvement.

Fortunately there was at that time, incumbent of the vicarage, a character as ignorant of the world, but as learned in books, as Harclai could possibly wish. To him he applied for assistance, but at first without success, though backed with the offer of a stipend equal in amount to half the living itself. But the vicar was rich with an income of one hundred pounds a year, and being, moreover, impatient of all restraint upon his hours, from the despotism acquired over them, during the habits of a college life, he would have refused the heir of the crown as a pupil, with an archbishopric as a reward, had it chained him to any particular service at any particular time. But what his indolence refused, his benevolence, and still more, his virtuous indignation, granted; and, upon being informed of the tyranny exercised over De Vere, he consented to receive him.

Dr. Penruddock was about sixty years old,

when he thus undertook to impart to De Vere, some of the learning which he had acquired in the recesses of his cloister at Oxford, from which he was remarkable for never having stirred during a fellowship of thirty years. More than learning, however, was not in his power; for it is hardly possible to conceive a life that had been either more uniform, more harmless, or less active—perhaps I might add, from its extreme simplicity, more happy, but that the advocates of ambition, as the proper stimulant of human nature, might laugh at my own simplicity, as much as they certainly would at Penruddock's.

It happened that the vicarage was that of his native village, and in the gift of the college of which he was a fellow, and from the moment of his election, all his hopes, wishes, and aspirations were directed to the one object of succeeding to the cure of the place that had given him birth. If this was ambition, it was not of that vaulting sort, which o'erleaps itself, for in the end his wishes were crowned, though after waiting the deaths of two incumbents. This exhausted near thirty years of his life, during which, he was but twice known to have stirred more than five miles from the University, nor

ever had he been without the college walls, after nine o'clock. Here he attained to considerable, if we may not say profound learning, in a variety of branches, though the usefulness of many of them might be made a question.

From all this it may easily be imagined, that when he did at last emerge from a fellow's room, to a snug vicarage, he brought with him all his old manners. So inveterate, indeed, were the habits of Dr. Penruddock, that in his very village, or even in his own garden, he never appeared without a band; and would have worn his gown, too, but that in his quadrangle at Exeter College, he knew he had often dispensed with it.

Hence also, whether at his own, or at other tables, he always repeated the college Latin graces, to which he had been accustomed, prefacing them with the usual "Oremus." His notions of his duty as a parish priest were, however, apostolically bold. Thus a man of rank and fortune, in the neighbourhood, having neglected to come to church, he thought it his duty to go to the hall house, though he did not visit there, to remonstrate with him on his evil course of life. The gentleman resented the liberty, and refused his exhortation; upon

which, the next Sunday, and every Sunday afterwards, when he came to pray for the whole state of the church, he added, with great fervour, "but particularly for the soul of Sir William Wilful, Knight, who never comes to church to pray for it himself."

Such was the worthy and learned person, whom Harclai obtained as a tutor for his friend's son, when neglect and abandonment in the essential point of education, seemed to be his singular destiny.

The business of instruction now went on cheerfully; and such was the talent, as well as (from the absence of all inducements to the contrary,) the application of Mortimer, that, in respect to books, few of his age went beyond him. It was in the outward appearance alone, in the show and polish of the class of youths to which he felt he belonged,—in short, in the power of making one among his equals, that he bewailed the neglect in which he was suffered to languish. The ancient gentry of the neighbourhood, friends of his father and respecters of his name, would have gladly admitted him the companion of their rising progeny; but a sense of the inferiority of his exterior, and, as he thought, of his personal acquirements, kept him

aloof. The call at Talbois of a well mounted youth, which sometimes happened, was sure to put him to flight; and he has confessed, that this sense of degradation, has, in the concealment of a lonely chamber, when a gentleman had inquired for him at the gates, cost him bitter tears; but—

"Sweet are the uses of adversity."

The circumstances we have related, taught him to reflect much, and to determine for himself. He grew ashamed of his shame; and though he never remitted most indignant remonstrances with his brother, by degrees he assumed a firmness, a pride, and a decision of mind, which never afterwards left him.

The solitariness of his life, also, contributed to form other parts of his mental character. As he was allowed to wander where he would in the intervals of study, he became acquainted with all the scenes of his beautiful neighbourhood; its rough inhabitants, its woods and walks, its castles and seats. Hours upon hours has he passed alone, and thought them happiness enough, from the perfection of the freedom they gave him; and he was often delighted to trace, (as he thought he could,) in Tutbury

Castle, the revelries of John of Gaunt, in the midst of his court of minstrels, when he gave them a king, and a code for their government, under the ancient title of "the laws of the *ministralx.*"

Of course he was a troubadour, and sang of knights; and would have sung of ladies, even at sixteen, (for both his feeling and his imagination were warm enough,) but he had yet no ladies to sing of, and no others he thought were worthy of his attention, much less of his muse. For though he could already appreciate beauty, in whatever garb he saw it, and might, therefore, think a peasant pretty; yet, from the very first, there was always something about him that forbade his being pleased with any thing unpolished, or unintelligent; and in his then rusticated state, he met with nothing else. The only nymph, therefore, whom he admired, was that, which all so naturally admire, so few enjoy,

"The mountain nymph, sweet liberty."

And, surely no mistress was ever more favourable to an adorer; for as he cultivated her with all his heart, so she rewarded him with all her smiles.

It was this that tended most to form that

character, which afterwards pursued him into active life, and kept him always, under whatever forms of artificial or conventional restraint, a genuine son of independence and nature. Thus the habit of thinking and acting for himself, under difficulty and oppression, taught him to examine every thing, and shrink from nothing; so that his mind seemed already formed, at an age when other youths were still in the trammels of sameness and custom.

It may be supposed that Harclai and Penruddock were not idle spectators of his progress. The first only kindled the more in his indignation against the hard oppressor, that would have kept down his genius and chained him like Orlando to his paternal domain; the last gloried in the improvement to which he exultingly felt he had not a little contributed. Harclai did what he could to shame his brother into better treatment of him, but in vain; Penruddock said, "we will take a glorious revenge, by shewing what we can do without him."

What, however, they could not do, De Vere now resolved to do for himself. The brother, as has been said, in the wantonness of power, had prohibited all intercourse between Mortimer and his mother. This the boy felt, as "the

most unkindest cut of all ;" nor can any account be given of so diabolical a procedure, but what is drawn from that sort of diabolical nature, which feeling itself likely to be thrown into shade by one more honourable than itself, consumes with envy, and only finds consolation by persecuting what it envies.

To the interdiction therefore in regard to Lady Eleanor, Mortimer, now sixteen, resolved no longer to submit; and scorning to do that by stealth, which he felt he had a right to do in the face of day, he openly avowed his resolution to see his mother, spite of his brother's orders.

That worthy gentleman threatened to cut off his return to Talbois for his disobedience; which was answered by a demand through Harclai, of the legacy left him by his father; and this for the moment silenced the oppressor.

The visit was paid, and Lady Eleanor was charmed with the opening graces of her son. Indeed nature had done much for him. It had given him countenance, manners, and even accomplishments, in short, the *maintien noble,* which the most expensive education cannot always confer. Perhaps he wanted the *knowing* air which youths brought up at public schools so early acquire, (beneficially or not may be

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

made a question); but he also wanted their habits of dissipation and familiarity with vice; and a better air was supplied by that native dignity, which even the flower of Eton and Westminster are sometimes without.

Thus, in the obscurity of his village, and amid the slights of his brother's house, De Vere's spirit, as we have seen, instead of sinking, bore him aloft; and having defied his brother in the very height of his tyranny, he now resolved to break his bonds at once. Accordingly he sent a formal demand of the "poor allottery his father left him by testament," with that to go and buy fortunes.

His intentions were for the army. "My father's heart," said he, "is awake in mine; his sword should not sleep."

But a great change was now at hand. Before his demand could be answered, his brother was no more. Three days of fever and inflammation sufficed to remove him, and delivered Mortimer from the tyranny of his protection.

As he had never loved him, he pretended no grief. Penruddock ejaculated *Te Deum Laudamus*, and Harclai openly avowed his pleasure when his co-trustee, Dr. Herbert, and Lady Eleanor arrived at Talbois to consult upon the

destiny of her aspiring son, as well as to establish him in the seat of his ancestors.

Seventeen years had passed over the head of De Vere, when this event, so influential to his fortune, happened. Though by no means even now rich, and, for his rank, scarcely independent; by comparison he seemed opulent, and the world at his feet. But he felt cruelly the privations to which he had been condemned. The new friend whom he had found in Dr. Herbert, had hitherto been too much occupied by his college to interfere in his management; or, as he called it, his mismanagement. For Herbert, as we may suppose, wanted none of the virtues of generosity, nor was he personally afraid of the elder De Vere or his uncle; he, therefore, did not conceal his opinion upon the impropriety of burying alive a young man of family in clownish seclusion. He was, however, restrained from any active interference, partly because, while the elder brother lived, he was invested with no authority for it; partly from a not unreasonable pride, which withheld him from offering advice which had not been asked, and which, moreover, he knew would not be followed.

Now, however, all was smoothed. Mortimer,

the possessor of Talbois, was a very different person from the youth "who gained nothing under his brother but growth;" and though Lord Mowbray's intentions towards him were unknown, there was no reason to believe that he could be displeased if Dr. Herbert should now interpose with all the influence he could command, to promote and finish an education which it was supposed had been so shamefully neglected.

Lord Mowbray, in fact, himself joined the party at Talbois, within a few days of its being formed, and poured out many effusions of kindness to both his sister and nephew; one of whom he had not seen for years, the other, never. His astonishment at the appearance and character of Mortimer, who had been represented to him as an ignorant, vulgar, and ungovernable clown, may be conceived. His compliments upon the subject to Lady Eleanor, and indeed to the youth himself, were in proportion; and he could not sufficiently felicitate them and himself, on the benefit of having Dr. Herbert on the spot, to direct their views in regard to the future destiny of the remaining De Vere. As for Harclai, though entitled, he said, as a man of family and education to some respect, he thought he had

been much too long out of the world to have a voice regarding any thing in it. And as for Penruddock, to whom he was introduced, he considered him little better than an ourang-outang, utterly incapable of forming, much less of delivering an opinion upon that, or indeed upon any subject.

It is difficult to look into the heart of man, particularly that of a common-place politician. Though Lord Mowbray's visit was attributed by his sister, and perhaps by his nephew, solely to kindness, there might be other motives quite as powerful, though not equally ostensible for the movement.

We have said that in the wreck of the principal estates of the De Vere family, the influence in a certain borough for which the elder De Vere had sat, had been preserved. Now, if there was one thing upon which Lord Mowbray piqued himself more than another, it was in the management of a borough interest; and as Mortimer was a minor, and several years must elapse before he could succeed his brother in the seat, supposing the interest to be preserved, the crisis seemed to require peculiar vigilance in some one of the family to prevent this solitary, but valuable pearl, from being ravished from its pos-

sessor, and, so far, diminishing the personal consequence with the first minister of the great Lord Mowbray himself. It became therefore doubly essential to him to pay a visit to Talbois; for it was necessary for him to ascertain the personal character and views of his nephew, when he should be old enough to use his family interest; and to fix upon a proper person, with all proper caution, to represent the family in the meantime. No virtue forbade this, nor do we blame Lord Mowbray either for his anxiety or activity in the matter; and if the minister set both down to zeal in the common cause of government, while Lady Eleanor set it down to kindness for herself and son, how could Lord Mowbray prevent the misunderstanding? We will not positively say that there might not have been even another, or something approaching to the semblance of another object respecting the seat, mixed up, insensibly as it were, with the other two, and which rather flitted before Lord Mowbray's parliamentary vision, than embodied itself practically in his intentions. But of this, hereafter. At present, these objects were only visionary; and, left to himself, he had not courage enough to pursue the prospect; for he was in fact on this subject, in the situation of

the half-plunged Macbeth, when reproached by his bolder consort with being like the "poor cat i' the adage."

The result, therefore was, that like a good *prochain ami*, he took charge of the De Vere interest with proper and successful zeal; and his private secretary, Mr. Bromfield, a gentleman recommended to him by the prime minister, was pitched upon to represent the borough until De Vere should be of age to come forward himself.

CHAPTER X.

OPPOSING THEORIES.

> Out of your proof you speak ; we poor unfledged,
> Have never wing'd from view of the nest, nor know
> What air's from home.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

AND now a conclave sat at Talbois, in the presence of De Vere, and Lady Eleanor, upon the future plans and education of that youth.

The counsellors were all assembled in Lady Eleanor's drawing-room up stairs, in which she had now established herself. She and Lord Mowbray preserved a sort of state, in two ponderous arm chairs, of ancient crimson velvet; while the President, who was a great peripatetic, paced the room up and down in his argument. Harclai, sometimes, accompanied him, in the eagerness of his replies ; but for the most part sat with his chin on his hands, which were folded while they rested for support

on the top of his gold-headed cane. From this sort of watch-tower, his eye pursued the President, or glanced at Lady Eleanor, or De Vere, accordingly as the conversation turned. De Vere himself stood, not always silent, but always most observant, between his mother and his uncle.

The question was, how best to finish the education which had been so irregularly begun: and, that finished, what career of life was afterwards to be pursued. Dr. Herbert seconded, or rather took the lead of Lord Mowbray, in recommending an instant removal to college, and to travel during vacations, both at home and abroad, with a view, in the end, to plunge into public business, as a member of the House of Commons. It was then proposed that, under his uncle's auspices, he should attempt the same career of power, and ambition, which had been opened to his elder brother. These were objects on which the Doctor was peculiarly qualified to give advice.

The plan pleased all, save Harclai; and Lady Eleanor looked at her son with eagerness, as if she hoped for his willing approbation of what was so agreeable to herself.

He made no reply, but seemed anxious for

the sentiments of Harclai, who was evidently impatient to express them. For Harclai was not a man, either to be beaten out of his opinions, or to suffer his authority, where he felt he had any, to be easily set aside. In particular he was but ill disposed to submit to the superiority claimed by the President and Lord Mowbray, founded, as he said, solely upon a supposition falsely assumed, that their view of mankind was better than his own.

"I," said he, "who know the stings, and have felt the bite of men, cannot willingly turn out a youth, bare and uncovered, 'to bide the pelting of the pityless storm.'"

"It is a storm which he will ride out, at least as well as others," said the Doctor.

"Do others then," replied Harclai, "conquer passion, or resist flattery? Or, if he do this, which perhaps he will, (though I know not) will he be safe from the treachery of some hypocrite, in the same walk with himself, practising on the openness of his nature? I know him—you do not—every fool will irritate, every knave live upon him. If you fix him at court, he will never bend; if you send him to the bar, and his clients are rogues, he will throw up his

brief; if you enlist him under government, and he think you wrong, he will oppose."

At this last observation, Lord Mowbray turned pale, and thought it absolutely necessary to interfere, assuring Harclai he had made a supposition contradictory to itself, as it was impossible to enlist in party, still more to take office, and dream of such a solecism as to oppose the government of which he would form a part.

Dr. Herbert only smiled at the simplicity of his man of the woods, as he sometimes called Harclai, but did not deign to answer him, till he was roused to something like attention, by the serious manner in which Harclai continued.

"I see," cried the advocate of private life, "how cheap all this is held. I will beg the favour of you, therefore, to point out one ingenuous youth, who has ever enlisted in politics, and preserved his ingenuousness: who has ever served at court, and has not condescended to flatter; or who, in the presence of either minister or king, has not reduced himself from the high spirit of youth and honour, to be

'A wretched creature that must bend his body,
If Cæsar carelessly but nod on him.'

I tell you again, this being, will Mortimer De Vere never be."

Mortimer seemed moved at his words, and perhaps, still more at the emphatic manner in which he uttered them, and turned earnestly to Dr. Herbert to hear his reply.

"It were easy," observed the Doctor, with an air of great superiority, "to answer these common-place remarks, were it not better to content one's-self with denying that they are well founded. Were they sound, you would stifle the seeds of all fair exertion, and quench every spark of honourable ambition. If you are right, better at once to shut ourselves up again in our caves and our woods, which you," added he, with a sort of triumph of manner, "affect to do, and see what we should gain by it."

"We should regain our simplicity," said Harclai.

"And tear one another to pieces," replied the Doctor.

"Better do that, than smile in a man's face, and stab him," rejoined Harclai.

"Really," cried Lord Mowbray, interposing, "I wonder, Dr. Herbert, you will stoop to answer these savage notions, unworthy of any man who lives in the world."

"I live out of it," said Harclai, fixing his chin firmer on the head of his cane, while the vibrating property of his eyelids, formerly mentioned, found ample employment.

"But my nephew, sir," and his lordship waxed warm, "is to live in it, and may become an ornament to his name if he chuse."

"How?"

"By following my advice. From my connections with the minister, and the notice with which his majesty is graciously pleased to honour me; with his seat in parliament, and a wise and prudent use of it, by uniform support, neither varying to the right or left——"

Here his lordship was getting a little involved, and thought it prudent to stop. Mortimer remained in observing silence, and Harclai, to avoid gesticulations that might be disagreeable, absolutely closed his eyes, till the Dean came to Lord Mowbray's assistance.

"There is no doubt," said the President, perceiving that things could not be forced; "if Mr. Mortimer's disposition lies toward public life, and if his principles should lead him to the same side in politics as my lord's ——"

"*If!*" cried Lord Mowbray, staring at the

word. "They must, as Dr. Herbert well knows."

"I really know no such thing," said the President; and Lady Eleanor, seeing the effect of his uncle's observation on her son, entreated her brother to allow Dr. Herbert to proceed.

"I mean merely," continued Herbert, "that with such a connection, Mr. Mortimer's career may be brilliant."

"I beseech you at least to mark that," cried Lord Mowbray to Mortimer and Harclai.

"I do," said De Vere, "but can make no promises. I scarce know what my disposition may be when the time comes to decide. But in the mean while, I am most willing, nay desirous, of putting myself in the way of that improvement which I have so long wanted."

"That road at least is easy," observed Lady Eleanor, "for it is only to place yourself under our most excellent friend."

"My college," said the President, "will be proud to receive the son of Lady Eleanor."

"I wish good may come of it," cried Harclai; "but I should have hoped his education might have been finished, as it had begun, at Talbois."

"Under the Cornish Doctor?" said Herbert,

almost forgetting himself, into a levity bordering upon contempt.

" A Needwood boor," exclaimed Lord Mowbray with disdain.

Lady Eleanor expressed herself hurt, and De Vere bit his lips at this attack upon his honest tutor. " He was every thing to me," said he with a feeling unrestrained by the presence of his uncle; " when I might have fed swine and died in ignorance, for aught those cared who had the disposal of me. Dr. Penruddock was then to me no boor." The youth here stopped, for he was moved even to agitation, and Lady Eleanor with some stiffness observed, that with all his uncouthness, she wished there were many Penruddocks.

" Dr. Penruddock is uncouth," observed the President, changing his tone, " but I believe a respectable man, and probably a good scholar; but one *may* possibly, without ill manners, doubt his powers of finishing the education of a youth of any quality, particularly if he is to act a part in a world, which all confess the doctor never saw."

" He has read much," observed Harclai.

" Books," answered Herbert, " according to the wise Bacon, will never teach the use of

books. If Mr. Mortimer, therefore, intends to read men, he should live among them: he has already been but too much shut up."

To this, Mortimer himself assented, and observed that his own wishes carried him towards his father's profession, could his mother be brought over; but at any rate not to be confined to Talbois to lead the life of a hind; he therefore would attend the President with pleasure if he would be troubled with him.

Harclai said, that as to education, he would no longer oppose, but hoped it would only lead him afterwards to rest content at Talbois, without looking abroad to court the life of a slave.

Mortimer felt a flash on his cheek at this, which Lord Mowbray observing, exclaimed, "really, Mr. Harclai, this is downright rudeness, considering before whom you speak it. You perceive, sir, that my nephew wishes to see mankind; and he will see them where alone they are worth seeing, or can be known, I mean at court, and in the senate."

"I doubt the *alone* very much," observed Harclai, whistling to get rid of his bile.

"I own," said Mortimer, "I at least wish to know the world, and, if possible, make myself more fit for it than I am. I think, perhaps,

too much of my mother's and my own name; and though I have seen too many happy and worthy people lower than myself, to believe there is much in a name, yet I trust there is nothing wrong in wishing to be able to restore the family, at least, to the place it held in the time of my grandfather; if I fail, I know, at any rate, that I now can be very happy at Talbois."

Lady Eleanor here embraced her son, and both the man of the world, and the man of private life commended this speech. Dr. Herbert declared it was exactly as it should be, and promised every thing he could wish; while Harclai, fastening upon the last sentiment, said he only hoped that the world, if he was resolved to embark, would not unfit him for the innocence of such a retreat.

"You will too soon want it," said he, starting on his legs, "after you have encountered the spite and envy, the shouldering and struggle, and perhaps the secret hate of those you so much wish to know."

"For shame!" cried Herbert, "you would frighten a generous spirit if you could. I should be glad to know what is to prevent a young man of family from endeavouring to take a lead where he may do good?"

"The rascally maxims of those he is to lead," answered Harclai.

"I know not these maxims," said the President.

"Then go to Sir Robert Walpole," replied Harclai, "who said, 'it was well that many men could not be prime ministers, since they would not be able to bear with the profligacy of mankind.'"

"A very foolish declaration," observed Lord Mowbray.

"Yet Sir Robert was no fool," returned Harclai, "and I should be glad to know," here he braced himself up, as if in defiance, "what the President has to say to it."

"That he was very unfortunate," replied the divine, "in remembering only the vices of those he lived with, while the virtues passed unheeded. But this was the error of his character and of his government: the times, thank God, are changed, for there never was more public virtue than at present."

"An excellent remark," cried Lord Mowbray.

"Let us see your men of virtue out of office," retorted Harclai, wrinkling his face into a smile, or rather leer, while he followed the President to the bottom of the room, and then to the top again in the eagerness of argument. "To be sure, in these *changed*

times, no retired or expelled minister could apply the description which Bolingbroke gives of himself, when in, and when out of office."

"What is it?" said the Doctor, rather annoyed at his perseverance.

Harclai went on: "Those insects of various hues, which used to hum and buz about me while I stood in the sunshine, have disappeared since I lived in the shade. Nobody comes to a hermitage but for the sake of the hermit. In driving me out of party, they have driven me out of cursed company."*

Lord Mowbray here looked uneasy and sought for his snuff-box, while Lady Eleanor observed the picture was too sadly forcible.

"Yet what does it amount to," said the President, "but that Lord Bolingbroke was angry at the loss of his power, and then all who did not follow him into retreat, were fools and knaves, and buzzing insects of various hues. Let my lord show us that those who, he falsely says, *abandoned* him, ever professed to do more than their duty under him as the appointed leader by the crown; and I will then scold as loud as he."

"My dear doctor," cried Lord Mowbray, "you have explained this matter admirably."

* B. Works, ix. 4, 3.

"Yet Mr. Harclai torments us so ingeniously on these subjects," said Lady Eleanor, "that I should be glad to hear him farther."

"No! you would not," replied the humourist, "for I could only give you more of a most unfashionable creed."

"Yet let us hear it," cried Lady Eleanor.

"Nay," said Harclai, "it is not mine, for I would not shock you of the *haute noblesse*, in which of course I include the *noblesse* of Oxford," bowing to the President, "by intruding the ignorance of the woods and caves upon you. But you will surely hear Lord Halifax, for he was one of yourselves."

Lord Mowbray here again looked uneasy.

"Nay! he is very short," continued Harclai, "but a good witness for all that. He tells you in terms that 'a court may be said to be a company of well bred fashionable beggars: that if a man hath too much pride to be a creature, he had better stay at home; that if he would rise, he must begin by creeping on all fours;' nay, he adds, 'that a place at court, like a place in heaven, is only to be got by being much upon one's knees.'"

"Odious," cried Lady Eleanor.

"Observe," continued Harclai, "it is not I

that broach this scandal, but no less a person than Saville Lord Halifax."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Lord Mowbray,—"why he was once president of the council."

"Not the worst judge of his subject," said the satirist; "and I would ask therefore of his presidentship, there, what is to become of the generous spirit he was talking of just now! No! if there is such a spirit, let it tame itself as fast as it can, or flattery will soon get before it with a patron."

"Shocking," said Eleanor.

"But true," proceeded Harclai. "Yes!" added he, perceiving both Lord Mowbray and Herbert about to dissent, and looking at them with more sharpness than usual, "flattery is now the golden mean; flattery, whether soft as the whispering of a flute, or shrill as a trumpet, according to the ear and taste to be flattered. It is the great secret of rising, now that open robbery and murder are out of fashion. The sooner therefore it is learned, the better. Yes!" continued he, striking his cane forcibly on the ground,

"'Hinge thy knee,
And let his very breath whom thou'lt observe,
Blow off thy cap; praise his most vicious strain,
And call it excellent.'"

The energy with which this was uttered, engaged all Lady Eleanor's interest, and silenced Lord Mowbray, who had shewn a great disposition to interrupt the speaker; while the evident attention of De Vere to his uncourtly friend gave something like uneasiness to his other guardian.

"I cannot," said the latter, "allow our inexperienced young ward, (if I may so call him,) to take this account of the world as the true one. Were it so *I* too would be the advocate of Talbois. No doubt there are flatterers at court, as elsewhere; and an old worn-out courtier like Lord Halifax, or a disappointed one like Lord Bolingbroke, may endeavour to dignify themselves in retreat by calling names, like battered rakes or discarded lovers, whose mistresses have jilted them. But heaven forbid that the excellent rising spirits of the age should be extinguished under such sweeping—such commonplace censure. The love of fame is the noblest incentive to noble deeds. It will not let the spirit rest, but forces it to break its puny bonds, and assert itself spite of all opposing circumstances. Genius and real nobleness of soul cannot be repressed—cannot crouch like the slave you mention. Was Lord Somers this slave?

Would such a spirit as his condescend to flatter as you have imagined? Did it not rather claim to command, to struggle with difficulties, 'and by opposing, end them?'"

He paused, and Lord Mowbray, pleased with his auxiliary, echoed these questions.

"It were easy," continued Herbert, "to conjure up a thousand phantoms in the shape of splenetic quotations from the writings or conversations of disappointed men, who, be it observed, are by no means confined to courts. I could out-Swift and out-Bolingbroke you too, if I chose, even on your own side. For example, I think his lordship says somewhere, to his friend and colleague in mortification: 'To hanker after a court is fit for men with blue ribands, pompous titles, and overgrown estates. It is *below* either *you* or *me*, one of whom never made his fortune, and the other's grew rotten at the very moment it grew ripe.' Now, I ask, why are courts, where at least are assembled many of the best characters in the nation, though accompanied if you will, as all mixed societies are, by some of a different sort; why are they to be considered as *below* such equivocal people as Swift or Bolingbroke? If they are too good for courts they are too good

for any large assembly; for a house of peers, or of commons; or even for a church itself; and if they are so immaculate that their fellow-men are unworthy of them, they have nothing left for it but to fly to the desert and commence hermits. But his lordship himself lets out the whole secret! 'One never made his fortune, and the other's grew rotten at the very moment it grew ripe!' and, *therefore*, say these consistent persons, what both had been pursuing with such eagerness all their lives, had, now they were disappointed, never been worth pursuing at all! Better authority than this must, I trust, be adduced to influence Mr. De Vere to the side you recommend. But if you will have authority, take it also on the other side, from a contemporary of these very parties, and, with submission, an infinitely better judge; because, though no one knew courts better, she enjoyed nothing, and wanted nothing from them."

Harclai, who had not much liked these last observations of the President, pursed up his mouth, in somewhat of uneasy expectation of what was to follow, and the attention of the rest of the audience was redoubled.

"I refer," said the President, observing the expectation he had kindled, "to an admirable

letter from that very sensible woman, Lady Betty Germain, provoked by the selfish, and I may say vulgar railing of Swift against courtiers, and particularly against his and her friend, Lady Suffolk. It is the best lecture he ever received upon the injustice and common-place of his notions. I, of course, cannot quote the words; but the substance is too impressive not to be remembered. Addressing Swift, I think she says, 'I heartily subscribe to your creed, that I detest avarice in courts, corruption in ministers, and betrayers of the church in mitres. But I want an infallible judge *to tell me when this is* really so. I have lived long enough to know, those *out* of power and place, always see the faults of those *in*, with dreadful large spectacles. Experience has taught me how wrong, unjust, and senseless, party factions are; therefore, I am determined never wholly to believe any side or party against the other.' "Hence," continued the President, "this excellent woman had friendships with persons both in and out of favour; and though she respected Swift, she admired and loved Lady Suffolk, whom by very senseless abuse he endeavoured to make her hate."

Lady Eleanor seemed particularly pleased

with this authority cited by the President; who seeing Harclai not prepared to answer him, thus proceeded.

"You see then it is nothing to the purpose, that there have been many hypocrites, who have got on by flattery; many by treachery; some by unblushing impudence; some by mean insinuation. I grant you may instance many governors, whose sole object has been their own advancement; but as well might you oppose the career of a youth who devotes himself to arms, because he may be killed, as to deter him from encountering the world, because his virtue may be ruined."

The doctor turned his eyes on De Vere, as he said this, and was pleased to find by the animation of his countenance, that it was not thrown away. Lady Eleanor, too, became highly animated, and De Vere, breaking silence, observed, "I own it seems as cowardly to be afraid of the world we are born in, as it is irksome and dull to be always buried in a little nook of it; but even if we fail, failure is not dishonour."

"Heaven forbid it should," said Lady Eleanor.

"So thought the flower of chivalry," said the President, looking significantly at both mother and son, "when after his kingdom was ruined by one disastrous battle, he wrote to his parent, 'Madam, we have lost all except our honour.' A man who could thus feel, is, indeed, above the storms of the world. He is the worshipper of that true fame, equally independent of court favour, or popular caprice; for fame, as we have been beautifully told,

> 'Is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
> Nor in the glist'ring foil
> Set off to th' world, nor in broad rumour lies;
> But lives and spreads aloft, by those pure eyes,
> And perfect witness of all-seeing Jove.'"

There was an elevation about all this that won upon the secret hearts of De Vere and his mother, whose whole attention had been given to the subject, and who, though often shaken by Harclai, at length fairly avowed themselves the proselytes of Herbert.

The result was, that the plan was approved; even Harclai gave his assent to the Oxford experiment, and, with reluctance, to the career in the world that was to follow. Upon this last, however, he continued to be prophetic.

"Go," said he, shaking hands with De Vere; "view the world you so wish to see; if I know you, you will soon be satisfied, and soon shall we see you again at Talbois."

CHAPTER XI.

COLLEGE.

O! 'tis a parlous boy,
Bold, quick, ingenious, forward, capable!
SHAKSPEARE.

DR. HERBERT carried off his pupil in triumph to Oxford, which opened as a new world upon the senses of the then rustic De Vere. Yet were they not dazzled; nor had even a Vice-Chancellor, with his beadles and maces, more terrors for him, than the elephant of Pyrrhus for the firm-nerved Roman. He had more to encounter from the superciliousness of his fellow-students, who arrayed themselves in all the terrors of seniority over a green-horn. It was expected that he would shrink before their scrutiny. Not so; for there was a sturdy defiance in him which they by no means liked; and a very few days enabled him, (in regard to human wonders at least,) properly to appreciate all he saw.

His independence, however, appeared more strongly developed towards the higher powers, than even towards tufted or velvet capped under graduates.

At the end of the very first week, he was called upon to read what is technically denominated a theme. Recluse as he had been, this had no doubt its terrors; he, however, addressed himself to it, in all simple straightforwardness, as a mere duty, and had no difficulty but of voice to fill the hall. Now, it happened that the functionary who presided over this department, was sometimes deaf, and always peevish. On that day he was both, and, not quite hearing De Vere, sternly called out from the chair of authority, "*Eloquere aut descendas.*" To the astonishment of the whole hall, the command was instantly obeyed, and the youth with perfect composure advancing from the desk to the high table, surrendered his theme and quietly returned to his place.

As this was in the face of the whole college, it was deemed by the tutors an act of most audacious rebellion, and a sort of drum-head court martial was held upon it, in which it was determined that a formal charge of contempt should be laid directly before the President.

Dr. Herbert was therefore surprised with an address from the tutors in a body against his young friend. The answer of De Vere was simplicity itself; he meant no disrespect; he had spoken out to the utmost of his physical power, and finding he could do no more, he had obeyed the order by descending from the desk, merely as a thing of course. The tutors smiled incredulous at this apparent singleness of heart, and almost urged it as an aggravation of the offence. No young man in the University, they said, was ever so simple; to which De Vere, with a sort of primitive calmness, replied,

"If it is simple to tell the truth, I certainly am a simpleton."

The tutors were nettled, but it was more at his self-possession, contrasted with their own anger, than any feeling that he was acting a part; and Dr. Herbert dismissed the complaint. The affair made a noise, was criticized, and the character of the youth differently estimated; but somehow or other, from that time all ranks agreed in giving him credit for great firmness of character; and this character he never lost. This, and his rapid acquisitions, together with an opening dignity of manner, his known high connections, and the notice of the President,

soon converted the fresh man into a personage with whom no one could take a liberty; and the recluse of Talbois rose in a very short period to a full level of respectability with the most deeply initiated, whether Soph, or fine gentleman of Eton or Westminster.

It was now that his life assumed a colouring and enjoyment, of which he had hitherto formed not even a notion. The acquisitions of learning delighted his spirit of inquiry, and the charms of elegant literature polished his taste. They softened though they did not enervate his heart. The President led him skilfully by the hand through these flowery paths, and gave him golden assistance in all his engaging objects. But he was careful in doing so, not to forget the object he always held to be of still more consequence to him—the acquisition of the sciences most necessary to those who engage in the career of business and ambition. His pleasure in observing the fine taste and high cultivation of De Vere, was not altogether unmixed, when, as he said, he saw him absorbed by them.

"You love an evening walk," said he, "and it is good; but you need not protract it into moonlight; and though it is often good to be

alone, it is not good to let it make you shun society."

And when De Vere would talk of the charms of philosophy, to which he was approaching for the first time, and found so sweet, he would reply,

"I, too, am for philosophy; but it is for that which fits us for the world, not that which teaches us to abandon it."

De Vere would agree, and please him by talking of Homer; but when he said something about lighting his lamp to Seneca, and the philosophical works of Cicero, the President would shake his head, and say he would rather it were to the Orations, or Thucydides.

He was glad, however, to find himself seconded by De Vere's own wishes in pursuing the plan originally laid down, of visiting London, and different parts of England, and even of France and Holland, during the vacations. What he saw, however, in these short intervals, only awakened his desire to see more. The charms of travelling had their usual effect: a little would not content him, where the prospect was so wide, the good so immediate, and the mode of obtaining it so pleasing. He therefore

conceived the design (but faintly opposed by Herbert, and not at all by his uncle) of visiting the whole of the Continent, and studying all its various politics and manners in a regular and lengthened system of travel, as soon as his college studies should be finished. This evidently proceeded more from his desire of general instruction and information, than any impression of its necessity in advancing his intended career. Herbert, therefore, would rather have seen him plunge at once into business, and seek these collateral advantages, as opportunity might offer. But so many things could be, and were offered on the other side, both by De Vere and Lord Mowbray, that the President gave it up, and it was determined that our future man of the world should see it in a less confined sphere than his own country, and pass a year or two on the Continent, as soon as he quitted college.

"It will retard his progress in the House of Commons," said Herbert.

"It will make him fitter for it when he does come," said Lord Mowbray, "and meantime we shall have his effective vote through his present proxy, Mr. Bromfield."

But romantic he still was, spite of London, and even of Paris, the wonders of which opened,

but did not dazzle his understanding. And here, by the *entrée* it afforded him to the best society, his relationship to Lord Mowbray gave him a considerable advantage. It was the only advantage it did give him.

With all this, Talbois and Needwood, and the Dove and the Trent, were never forgotten, and we may be sure Harclai and Penruddock were not unremembered. The latter, indeed, before De Vere's final departure from college, paid his great debt to nature. His grateful pupil made a journey expressly to honour his obsequies in his village church; and never did fonder or more confiding hope accompany the wish with which he engraved on his tomb the concluding words of his simple epitaph, "*Requiescat in pace.*"

The President, however, was but half satisfied. He loved De Vere for his father's sake, and his own. He loved his high qualities, and admired his abilities; he felt, too, the necessity for his advancement, which, he said, nothing but his too quick sensibilities could retard. He had had many rising young statesmen under his superintendence, and many who had risen, still communicated with him in confidence. He wished De Vere to add to their number.

There was one quality, among many, in the government of his college, which distinguished the President; the observation of character, and of the suitableness or unsuitableness of the friendships among the young men under his guidance. These he was often known to interfere with, and generally with advantage. Possibly next to De Vere, the young Lord Eustace enjoyed most of his favour. Indeed, it was a wonder he was not first, for he was of a very ardent and aspiring temper, and all his ardours and aspirations carried him towards the world. To shine in court and senate, to lead a party, and brandish the state's whole thunder, was thus early the declared object of his ambition The son of a minister, he aspired to be a minister himself; and as this could only be effected through politics, party, and parliament, they were his eternal themes; and London, as their only seat, the only sphere of his thoughts.

To Windsor, indeed, where the court then resided, he was not averse: and to walk upon its terrace of a Sunday evening, in the train of royalty, he had been known to escape from the discipline of his college.

Strange to say, an intimacy grew up between Lord Eustace and De Vere, without objection,

if not under the auspices of the President. But, dissimilar as they were in tastes, they had many things in common. Both had great ardour and energy; both had talents, powers, industry, and a high sense of honour; both, too, were men of birth, and both designed for public life. The President saw their dissimilarities, but thought they might temper one another, with advantage to both. He therefore rather encouraged an intimacy which nothing forbade on either side, but a mistaken pride on the part of De Vere. This pride, after some little resistance, was fairly beaten down by the experienced Herbert.

"You are courted," said he; "hence, no one can impute design to you in forming this intimacy. You are independent, and want nothing of Lord Eustace, but he may want you. Yield nothing; but, on the other hand, do not exact what to no one belongs—more than equality of treatment."

De Vere was swayed by this sensible direction, even although he at the same time received a letter from his uncle on the subject, which had nearly turned him the contrary way. "Cultivate this noble lord," said the letter, "by all the means in your power. With the talents and

ambition he is said to possess, he must, from the influence of his family, be every thing in the state; and as his follower and devoted friend, you cannot fail of rising with him."

"I will be the *follower* of no man on earth," said De Vere, tearing the letter to pieces; "nor even a devoted friend in advance, to any one."

The impression was so strong, that it required all Dr. Herbert's ability to sooth his indignation. He allowed that Lord Mowbray's view of the matter was selfish, and his expressions clumsy. "Strip them, however, of their dress," said the President; "and what is there in them to trench upon your independence? If you really like this young man on his own account—if you agree in his principles, both in morals and politics, are you to reject his friendship because really he is likely to want you in the great cause of the state?"

De Vere yielded again to this practical advice: and as the term of his college studies was now drawing fast to a close, ambition began to shed its attracting influence over his young heart. It was, however, an ambition of a peculiar sort—felt only in idea, viewing every thing in distance, and arraying itself in forms and colours only of the most pleasing nature. It had no

difficulties to combat, no passions to conquer, no maddening excitements, no rancour towards political enemies; and above all, no jealousies of political friends, which is, perhaps, a more deep and consuming feeling than the hatred of enemies themselves.

De Vere had no conception that such feelings as jealousy and hatred were the offspring of the passion he had been told to encourage; his ambition was, therefore, peculiar to himself. Oh! that in the career of the world, this could always be the ambition pursued.

Though the principal college friend of De Vere was the nobleman just mentioned, there were others who had a share in his kindness, and, in some degree, in his confidence. Among these, was a gentleman of the name of Clayton; who, though not distinguished by any peculiar talent, and who did not even compensate the want of this by any remarkable suavity of manner, (except to his superiors,) was yet a most remarkable and highly gifted character. For he had an art, perhaps the most useful in the whole circle of arts, the art of rising. And though it must be owned that vanity, even the vanity that attends upon mere fashion, rather than any nobler aspiration, was the original im-

petus to this, yet such was its force, that he never rested contented on any one step, while another remained to be mounted. This may be noble or contemptible, according as it is managed; and as Mr. Clayton managed it, to some it may have appeared certainly not noble.

But never was there such a mistake. The qualifications for rising, as he chose to make the attempt, are of far more difficult attainment than are imagined. The devotion of self to the will of another, the immolation of one's comforts by the total surrender of one's independence—the destruction of one's hours—the sacrifice of tastes, opinions, pleasures, and pursuits, —the not choosing to say one's soul's one's own, when a patron says otherwise; and all this, accompanied by a forgetfulness of one's own family, or those with whom one has set out in the world, and a noble disdain of the good or bad opinion of those beneath us, when we have passed them: all this partakes almost of the nature of greatness; and all this is required to rise in the road which Mr. Clayton thought it best to take to preferment.

Yet, as has been hinted, his ambition, particularly at first, was of a strange colour; for it did not so much consist of that honourable

aspiration after power which springs from the desire of using it nobly, and which really does make this dangerous passion virtue, as to mix with the great *because* they were great; to be numbered with people of fashion, *in order* to be fashionable; and to be employed on embassies from one titled personage to another, because they were titled. This had a charm for him almost equal to the acquisition of place and profit itself. This last, indeed, was at length the predominating object of his heart; but it was always gilded by the objects first enumerated, if indeed the first had not been the original spring that called his subsequently developed powers into action. In short, Clayton was from nature a tuft-hunter, from necessity a place-hunter, from habit an actor, from disposition a hypocrite.

Yet was this character not altogether unmixed with something that but for his selfishness, might have made him in reality what he often appeared; amiable in feeling, if not just in mind. He was sensitively alive to what is called sentiment: the heroines of the stage drew from him real tears; Roscius roused him in imagination, at least, to the full swell of virtue. He has been seen to weep over Lear, and redden indig-

nantly with Hotspur. A tale well told would electrify him with the passions of the story; in the senate he would catch the fire of the speaker; and in a cathedral, he could melt in rapture to sacred song. But all this could pass in the transition of a moment. The effect, however strong, never surprised him into one single deviation from his main object. Never, as to this, was he off his guard; if, indeed, he was not able sometimes to make these emotions, (according to the character of those who witnessed them,) subservient to the point he at the time had to carry. Thus, everywhere true to himself, and master of the great qualities for rising that have been enumerated, let no one presume to despise him.

But the history of such a personage is not to be told in a moment, and deserves a more particular detail, which those who like to investigate human nature in its various shapes, may not think their time thrown away in perusing.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HISTORY OF A PARVENU

For neither man nor angel can discern
Hypocrisy, the only ill that walks
Invisible, except to God alone,
By his permissive will through heav'n or earth.
And oft though wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps
At wisdom's gate, while goodness thinks no ill
Where no ill seems.

MILTON.

ALL was alive in Grosvenor Square. It was a gay summer night, if, in London, June is summer. The streets were not yet quite abandoned by merry mechanics, and other classes who had stolen out to enjoy a mouthful of purer air than their shops and dark parlours could yield them. Some were returning to bed, some to supper; all seemed recreated, and beheld the rolling of the carriages, carrying their superiors to their own peculiar amusements, without envy. A few stragglers had collected round a magnificent mansion, in which open doors, many lights, many footmen, and a throng of visitants, announced an entertainment of the higher order.

THE TANJORE ... SWATI MAHAL

It was an amusing thing to observe the crowd which had beset the door, criticising the company, their dress and appearance, and applauding or sneering as beauty and diamonds, ugliness and plain clothes, challenged their attention.

One lady visitor, however, united all suffrages by the uncommon elegance, richness, and beauty of her attire and person. A silken foot and ancle of charming symmetry, first fixed the eye, which was afterwards busied with a shape equally perfect, and finally riveted by a face in which truth and loveliness themselves seemed combined. What was most remarkable, was the extreme youth of this elegant fairy, for such she seemed, and which could not have exceeded fifteen years. The party, indeed, which she joined, was, in effect, one of those formed for the recreation of our young nobility, who were not yet introduced, in other words, who had not *come out.*

A buzz of delight issued from the critics, male and female, as she stood a moment on the steps, waiting for her chaperon; and the footmen were observed to shew her more than common attention as she passed through the hall.

Among the spectators without, there was one, a youth, who though equally intent in his gaze,

with the rest, had yet observed a perfect silence during the scene. Yet one would have supposed that he had a peculiar interest in the brilliant party who were assembling. He critically, but not rudely, eyed the visitors, their equipages, the thronged hall, and the illuminated windows; but he joined in none of the indications of feeling shewn by the crowd. In truth, he felt a little ashamed of his situation, and moved off immediately after the *entrée* of the beautiful and high-born girl who has been just mentioned.

But he went with a down-cast brow, and a heavy heart; he seemed unhappy, and was evidently under excitement, but it was not the excitement of generosity or virtue. He sighed and bit his lips as he returned to his mother's house, in an inferior street in the neighbourhood.

"Alas!" said he, throwing himself on his bed, "why are creatures made with lots so unequal? Why was I born to love and admire, yet be for ever exiled from such society as I have seen; condemned, instead of splendour, to the poor and mean circle in which I must always move, unless some good star prevail to elevate me? Why should there be a class of persons to which I cannot be admitted,

such as at this happy house? Why such an exquisite creature as this young lady, who would think me vile were I to approach her? And with whom must I associate? my father's too numerous progeny of honest, common creatures, who cannot compare with the meanest of the dazzling people I have just seen."

It was thus that young Clayton (for it was he) lamented himself. He had long been what he thought an unfortunate, certainly an unhappy person, from having been born with that sort of disposition which leads a man to consider all above him as a superior race of beings, whom it is humiliation not to mix with, and unhappiness not to equal.

This is a very different feeling from that impatience of inferiority which, falling upon a generous nature, leads on to noble deeds, and creates a Henry IV., a Chatham, or a Wolf. The trophies of Miltiades would never have broken Clayton's rest; but a house in Grosvenor Square to which he *could not* be admitted, kept him all night with a sleepless, and almost a tearful eye. His sister, an amiable girl, thought him not well, and offered to nurse him. But his sister never appeared so plebeian, and therefore so little able to soothe him. He turned from

her with disgust. He was, indeed, born of a father respectable in character, but pretending to no greater a situation than that of curate and evening lecturer of a church in the city; and of a mother, no higher than a tradesman's daughter. Every thing, therefore, about him was homely, and had he remained with them, he might have been homely too, and possibly happy. But he was sent (the only one of his family) to a public school, where, by associating with higher bred persons (to whom he paid the most assiduous court, so as to be admitted into their circles), it created for him that character which he never afterwards lost.

All his efforts were now directed to escape from his family, and natural associates; and by dint of the exertions of that very family beyond whom he wished to soar, he was sent a few months before, to the same college which had just received De Vere.

To college, as may be supposed, his disposition accompanied him, only fomented in a tenfold degree. Tassel hunting was his delight; his being's chief good; his only end and aim; and we are free to bear witness to the superiority of his abilities in this respect. For with no other superiority whatsoever; no eminence in talents

or in literature, in which his figure was merely decent; he was admitted to the society which alone he loved, and passed his time with lords, and the friends of lords.

Being somewhat older than De Vere, he thought, on his arrival, he might make him some advances. They were made cautiously, and humbly, so as in the end to subdue a disposition which, though open as day, did not easily lend itself to promiscuous acquaintances. Clayton knew this, but as he also knew De Vere's high family connections, and ready *entrée* into the *beau monde*, whether of Oxford or of London, he became an object of his most obsequious court. He was not, indeed, a tuft, but he was a gentleman-commoner; he was the friend and companion of dukes' eldest sons and marquess's eldest sons; and, above all, he was the nephew of Lord Mowbray, and Lord Mowbray was a minister. Under all obstructions, therefore, he determined to persevere.

The Parvenu's was a handsome countenance; it was smooth, and by many thought open (and De Vere was among the number); yet there were not wanting some, especially those who had known him from childhood, who detected a louring, lurking something, "stopping the career

of laughter with a sigh;" a something which indicated a fear to face you, and boded that all might not be so well within. However this might be, as De Vere, the most unsuspicious person in the world, could see nothing of it, he was alive only to what he was allowed to see; an active good-nature and facility to be employed in all offices, and all wants; a perpetual presence where he could be of service; a ready assent to all proposals, and a profession of attachment and devotion, which so much attention could not permit you to doubt for a moment.

What wonder if De Vere, as well as Lord Eustace, found ease, if not pleasure, in such an associate?

To be sure this created a little envy in others: the envy attendant upon the distinction he met with. But here the greatness of Mr. Clayton's character displayed itself; for as long as he knew he was advancing where he most wished to advance, he felt the most sovereign contempt for the opinion of all he left behind. Accordingly, the earlier companions of his life, with whom he had set out, and who could not equal his higher flight, he made no scruple to avoid; in vulgar language to *cut;* and this he accomplished in a manner so decided as to be

worthy a better cause. For it was not a gradual cooling off, a cautious compromise with foolish delicacy, which managed people's feelings; but all was finished at a blow. Having once determined to renounce a man, he was too open not to let him see it; and it must be owned, he went through the task with a most determined intrepidity of assurance. Complaints were indifferent to him, and he bearded resentment itself (in some cases, where he *knew* the parties), with a haughtiness and bravery, which procured him something even like respect, mingled with hatred, from those who were below him.

Having thus, as he said, weeded his acquaintance, he became more identified than ever with the society he loved; and De Vere, who knew nothing of his history, but who saw the loftiness of his bearing towards most of his own order, was so far unsuspicious, and, at that time, so ignorant, as to take arrogance for real superiority.

De Vere and Clayton became intimate, rode out together, drank wine together, nay, once or twice, in a long vacation, made short excursions together, and absolutely wrote to one another during absence.

If, during all this time De Vere saw nothing

very particularly to admire in the abilities or genius of his companion, on the other side, he saw nothing to blame; while the proofs he received of devotion to his person were so great, that he could not help, in return, loving him who shewed them. He at least felt that interest about him which made him studious to promote his advantage by all the means in his power.

"They are not many," said he to him one day, "but such as they are, they are yours; and if I succeed in the career my uncle has opened to me, of which I greatly doubt, whatever I can command for a friend shall be yours."

Clayton's smooth features and fair skin became agitated, and blushed all over at this intimation; and if De Vere set it down to the score of feeling, let other men of one-and-twenty blame him if they please—we certainly will not.

Clayton, in reply, assured De Vere that to know him and visit him in his family, after they should each quit college, was happiness enough, whatever might be his own lot.

As this was said upon the eve of De Vere's final departure from the University, we must

not be surprised if it had its effect, and if it produced an invitation to Mr. Clayton to accompany him in the ensuing vacation to Talbois. Here, wonderful to relate, the then first ambition of his heart was gratified, for Lord Mowbray was there.

Behold, then, our aspiring youth, introduced in little more than three short years from his matriculation at college, to the greatest object of his veneration—a Minister of State. Here his tact served him admirably, and enabled him to perceive that Lord Mowbray, though he had a coldness, and even a *hauteur* of manner towards his inferiors, at first very appalling, was yet to be won upon by that very demeanour in which the Parvenu most excelled —modest, humble, and devoted attention.

He had, indeed, that best of all qualities for a skilful ambition (in which I have heard an old and successful courtier say, in the plenitude of confidence, all other qualities for rising might be summed up at once), the quality of being a good listener. It is, indeed, inconceivable how many fortunes have been made, and reputations acquired; what confidences have been won, and views imparted; what invitations, introductions,

and, finally, promotions, have been the consequence of this little seemingly unimportant art. And yet, though nothing appears more easy than to listen, yet, somehow or other, this, of all easy arts, is the farthest of all from being within the scope of everybody's attainment. Nay, it has been observed, by those who have had the best opportunities of looking closely at things, that those most distinguished for abilities, particularly if they have any strong conceptions of their own, are the very worst at this play; while others, who are merely those imitative beings, characterised by Horace, as the "*Servum Pecus*," have beaten their more shining, but less gifted competitors, out of the field.

Clayton, for example, was consummate, while De Vere was downright stupid in this sort of management.

But, in the next place, Clayton had all the meek negatives of character to acquire or preserve a patron, which such a patron as Lord Mowbray required. I say such as Lord Mowbray, because, Heaven forbid that in our free and high-spirited England, all ministers should be like him. Happily there are enow to redeem

us from the silly imputation of intending to involve our governors in one blind and ignorant censure; high-minded and highly-gifted men, whose liberality of sentiment equals their genius, and whose disposition, as well as whose praise it is, in their intercourse with others, to let the delighted mind have the freest and most equal communication with them. These love congenial spirits, uninfluenced by the inequalities of station, and alive only to mental power. Such was one of the actual ministers at that time, of whom we shall have occasion hereafter to make large mention, and with such persons, though a De Vere might succeed, Clayton would indubitably fail. However this may be, we are bound to admit that the suppleness and deference of manner, look, and tongue, which fortune had bestowed upon him, as one of her most favoured children, were exactly calculated to produce the effect they did upon Lord Mowbray.

Accordingly, at the end of a few days' acquaintance, he pronounced him to be a modest, ingenuous, and very sensible young man; in discovering which last character, Lord Mowbray must have possessed facilities of judging peculiar to himself, since during very many conversa-

tions it would have been difficult to have related Clayton's share of them.

Pleased with the eulogy of his friend, Mortimer replied to his uncle's praise of him, that though not very brilliant, he was the most unpresuming, unpretending, friendly person alive.

"I like him the better," said Lord Mowbray, "for not being brilliant: I hate people of brilliant pretensions; they never make men of business, and give a great deal of trouble."

There is no denying that "some men have greatness thrust upon them;" for by the end of the visit at Talbois, Clayton had so established himself in the good graces of my lord, that he received an invitation to Castle Mowbray; which, of all incidents that could have happened, was just the most gratifying, and the nearest to his wishes and his aim. And yet, with pretty semblances of unworthiness in himself, and the demands which he said his mother had upon him, "set down with as much modesty as cunning," he, strange to say, (strange to less wise people than himself) declined it.

De Vere very frankly laughed at this self-denying ordinance; and Lord Mowbray, while he praised his modesty, looking a little hurt, nay, almost offended at being refused (a thing

to which, he said, he had been little accustomed,) Mr. Clayton, with great appearance of distress at his own ingratitude, in truth, with excellent good grace waved his self-disqualifications, and accepted the invitation.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HISTORY CONTINUED.

With a countenance as clear
As friendship wears at feasts.

SHAKSPEARE.

I raised him, and I pawned
Mine honour for his truth.

SHAKSPEARE.

WE see our Parvenu thus translated to Castle Mowbray, and at the summit of his then wishes; although fresh wishes and fresh objects immediately sprang up, dear to his hopes. For such is the nature of ambition of whatever sort, noble or grovelling, whether to govern a state, to lead an army, or to worm one's self into the favour of a great man, that no sooner is one step accomplished, than another rises, which the energetic mind is ashamed not to surmount.

It is thus that the fiend of ambition himself, is made to exclaim, with devilish energy,—

"Lifted up so high
I deign'd subjection, and thought one step higher,
Would set me highest."

But Clayton had now, from almost too great success in the first instance, no easy part to perform. Very little tact was necessary, to observe that Lord Mowbray had too much consciousness of his nephew's higher qualities to be perfectly at his ease with him. At least the Parvenu, with much less observation than belonged to him, might readily perceive a sensible difference in his lordship's manner and conversation, when De Vere was, or was not present. When with Clayton alone, he evidently himself, acted the protector with great dignity, condescended to give him maxims of life, particularly of official life, and even to relate some part of his own official history, in which the notice taken of him as a young man, by a deceased eminent prime minister, was descanted upon with complacency, and the Parvenu "wondered with a foolish face of praise." But if De Vere joined them, a sudden constraint came over both the minister and his *protégé*. The flow of both was stopped: Clayton smiled on De Vere, and Lord Mowbray, as he had little to say, resumed his habitual gravity, and sometimes looked fierce, to avoid looking foolish.

This was by no means thrown away upon

Mr. Clayton, whose faculties, blunt as they have been reckoned among the high public characters he afterwards mixed with, were of that nature to be peculiarly acute, where any thing was concerned that might directly or remotely be turned to account.

It was this watchfulness which enabled him to perceive that to praise or court De Vere as he had set out with doing, was not a matter of first necessity, in order to recommend himself to Lord Mowbray; and as in pursuing an end, it is one of the characters of wisdom to discard all unnecessary means, he very wisely laid this aside.

With De Vere personally, his devotion was as great as ever. His gratitude as well as attachment were eternal; and he only wondered how so insignificant a being as himself, could interest De Vere, or how he could ever make a suitable return for that interest—devoid of all power as he must ever be, even if he should succeed in the poor line he had marked out for himself, of a humble clergyman.

"For even if I succeed," said he, "the very consequence of success will be to separate me from you."

De Vere was moved, and expressing pleasure

in thinking of his attachment, asked whether he was so fixed in his love for the church, that he must necessarily devote himself to no other profession.

"To you I might confess," said Clayton; "the church is not even my choice. But in no other profession could I be master of my time and of my actions; the only true happiness, the *summum bonum* of true philosophy."

Spite of the soft whisperings of ambition to which he had begun to listen, this was too agreeable to De Vere's own notions, not to be regarded with complacency. He looked upon his friend as a man whose disposition and turn of thought were more congenial to his own than he had ever before imagined; and he began to feel the advantage it would be to have such an attached person always near him. After a turn or two, therefore, (for at this time they were walking in the shades of Castle Mowbray) he asked him if ever he had thought of an official life.

"Were I to consult only my private taste," answered Clayton, "I believe my happiness would confine itself to the wanderings of your beautiful Needwood, or such sylvan scenes as

Sudbury, both which you have so taught me to love."

De Vere was delighted with this echo of his own sentiments about those beloved haunts; beloved still, though his mind was now bent towards the world, nor did he like Clayton less when he added—

"With you for a companion, I would prefer such retreats to all that ambition could offer, whether in the church or elsewhere. But without such companionship, I own the lot of a country curate, or even of a puissant college tutor, has no charms for me."

"Then why not," said De Vere, "renounce your present views, and come with us into the world?"

The Parvenu smiled, but in a sort of bitterness, and with a downcast look, shook his head.

"Come," said De Vere, "I know what is passing within: you think if you embark you have no one to push you off shore, or keep you afloat when you leave the land. But you are a favourite with my uncle, and deserve to be so, from your attachment to us all."

"It is an attachment which will not accept

pay," replied Clayton, "so we had better not think of it; but I am eternally obliged—"

"Pooh!" said De Vere, "I will at least tell Lord Mowbray that you are not wedded to the church: and there most opportunely, 'with solemn step and slow,' his serene highness advances."

De Vere was even in playful spirits, from this new prospect he had opened to himself; for the smoothness and humility of Clayton had never so much won upon him; and in truth, the interest which the Parvenu knew well how to infuse into his handsome countenance, never made a better exhibition. De Vere, therefore, dismissing his friend, betook himself to his uncle in his behalf, with all his heart and soul; and as he was a total stranger to finesse, opened the matter at once, by telling him that Clayton had owned to him that the church, except from necessity, was not his choice.

"He has owned as much to me long ago," said Lord Mowbray, smiling.

"Indeed!" cried De Vere, with surprise.

"Not positively," replied Lord Mowbray, with an important shake of the head; "but you know, nephew, or at least will, one day or other, there are various ways by which a man

practised in affairs, may discover another's secret, and yet that other be entirely unconscious of it all the time."

By *practised* in affairs, Lord Mowbray always meant himself, which De Vere knew. Indeed, his lordship's features were never so relaxed as when he said this: they were quite alive with the thought of the practical illustration he might have adduced in proof of his position.

"I *can* conceive this," said De Vere; "and you mean, uncle, to say that your experience has discovered———"

"Never mind what I have discovered," interrupted Lord Mowbray, still nodding his head, and looking pleased: "it is quite sufficient, I tell *you*, that I have long found out what this young man may have attempted to conceal—but attempted it, I must say, in vain."

"May I ask," said De Vere, "how you feel towards him on the subject; because, from the recent death of your secretary, Mr. Bromfield, an opening seems already to present itself, if such is your wish?"

"Upon the whole," returned Lord Mowbray, with great dignity, "I feel favourably disposed; but I must first examine him more than I, or perhaps, you, may have done, before

I form my opinions. These things should never be hurried. I wish in particular to discover, whether he pretends to what is called genius, imagination, original thought, and other nonsense of that kind. If he does, I tell you fairly, he will not do for me. There is, indeed, one minister of state, Mr. Wentworth, who is of a very different opinion, because he is a man of towering genius and eloquence himself. All very well: all very well; but with very great submission to Mr. Wentworth, though a minister of state, he has done wrong in encouraging about his own person, as confidents in his most important department, men of poetry and imagination; persons, perhaps, thinking of speeches, rather than the business of their offices; and who, in the end,—may—on that account"—Here my lord hesitated; but De Vere begging to have the benefit of the whole remark, he went on, (looking round, and lowering his voice as he said it,)—"Men who, on that account, and when the time is ripe, may trip him up, either with the king, the first minister, or the House of Commons." Then, seeing De Vere look surprised, and almost incredulous, he added, "Such things have happened, and will happen

again, whatever you may think of it, nephew; for be assured experience is the best teacher, and you may trust me," (here he prepared himself with solemnity for one of two or three favourite quotations which he possessed)—

> "'There are more things in heav'n and earth,
> Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.'"

De Vere was sorry so much blame should be laid upon poor genius, but professed himself ignorant of the subject.

"You naturally are," said Lord Mowbray; "but when by your own fidelity to party, you have been let into the secret of affairs, as long as I have been, you will find I may be a true prophet."

To this, his nephew assented, as possible; but assured his uncle, that in the instance before them, they ran no danger, for no one had ever detected in Clayton, one single spark of that genius or original thought, which he so much feared; that his character seemed to be that of mere matter-of-fact docility, a great admiration for scenes of nature, and great devotion to his friends; at the head of whom he felt that he himself stood, "if, indeed," added

De Vere, " I am not already outrivalled by my uncle, for the kindness he seems to shew him."

" I have marked this in the youth," replied Lord Mowbray, with complacency; " he seems safe. We will talk further of this matter."

The result was, that several conferences were held apart from De Vere, in which Lord Mowbray endeavoured to discover, (and the Parvenu discovered the endeavour, and brought it fully to account,) whether he himself, or his nephew, were the chief object of Clayton's devotion; and in the end, his lordship remained thoroughly convinced, that De Vere was loved chiefly out of gratitude, while all real attachment, respect, and consideration, were bestowed upon himself.

This discovery, too, was made in a moment most critical for the fortune of Clayton; for at this very juncture my lord was beset with most puissant applications from persons of the first consequence, in favour of a gentleman of great hopes, and, as it was unfortunately added, of great independence, both of fortune and mind, whom they recommended as a proper successor to the late secretary.

" It will never do," observed Lord Mowbray,

"and as Dr. Caius said, 'There shall no honest man come to my closet;'" so his lordship determined, that he would have no man of independent fortune and mind for his secretary.

But another felicitous change awaited the Parvenu, beyond all that his most sanguine hope could have imagined: for this was precisely at the time when De Vere, in conformity to his long-settled plan, was preparing for a protracted absence on the continent. The death of Mr. Bromfield made it necessary to fill up the seat at Wellesbury, and as De Vere assented to his uncle's representation that the government ought not to lose a vote on account of his desire to travel, he even proposed, should Lord Mowbray appoint his friend to the vacant secretaryship, that he should also become his own *locum tenens* for the borough. The whole arrangement was approved; De Vere departed on his travels, and Mr. Clayton was introduced into the House of Commons.

This brilliant initiation into business, as it astonished Clayton himself, so it filled his old acquaintance, some with envy, some with disgust, and all with wonder. It was of little consequence to the Parvenu, who, while his heart's best desire was crowned by being introduced

into a rank in society beyond all hope, cared little for the sneers and contemptuous criticisms that were made on Lord Mowbray's choice on this occasion. A new world opened to him in the House of Commons, far surpassing any *beau idéal* he had ever ventured to form of his future fortune. The first men in the state, and, what was almost of as much consequence, the first in fashion, were there, and these, where he could, he cultivated with the whole force of his talents for insinuation. There also was Mr. Wentworth, and with him the leaders of the nation on both sides; and to these, from his office, and his patron's introduction, he was at least made known. At first, indeed, it being whispered that he was the mere *locum tenens* of a few months, he was regarded in that sort of doubtful light, which made the regular forces distant and cautious in admitting his advances. They cared not to consider him as legitimately initiated till they knew what was to be his real situation, and they were by no means disposed to acknowledge him by the authorised forms, established among legitimate powers, of invitations to dinner.

He had, therefore, occasion for all his mo-

desty and all his assurance to make the least way. But, to his honour be it said, he surmounted all. It became known that De Vere did not mean to return until he had completed a plan of travel on a most extended scale. The north (then not much known) was visited as well as the south. In fact, he remained full three years, which gave ample time for a manœuvring spirit. With his own adroitness, therefore, Clayton during that interval had conciliated the most jealous, and we may imagine that his talent for progression had not been inactive. He did not attempt to be a speaker, but his *tact* exerted itself, and if he was mute as a debater, he was an excellent cheerer. De Vere, on his return, found him in full possession of all the rights and privileges, in regard to notice, acquaintance, and other agreeable *et cœteras*, which belong to a regular subaltern in the army of government. He had become even useful in what was called the *management* of the House, and was noticed by Mr. Wentworth for his knowledge of the members, and the frequency and zeal of his reports. Such a notice he well knew how to turn to profit, and the main chance had been so well pursued, that during these three years he had made a greater

advance to his object than others during whole parliaments. In short, through the mist of futurity, gleams of hope had excited fresh expectations, and visions of brightness flitted before his eyes.

CHAPTER XIV.

POLITICAL LECTURES.

I have been politick with my friend, smooth with mine enemy.
SHAKSPEARE.

THE advance and success of Clayton were necessary to re-kindle in De Vere, interests in regard to official objects and party politics which had been almost laid asleep. It is neither necessary to the views of this biography, nor is it the intention to give any account of his travels. Our objects are at home. It is enough to say that, though general politics, and statistical inquiries, were zealously pursued by him, he was equally, if not more bent upon an examination of the manners and customs of his fellow-creatures with a view to that moral philosophy, which he always preferred to political, though the last was by no means undervalued. Of party politics he could acquire nothing abroad,

and of these, when he returned home, it is inconceivable, considering his accomplishments in every thing else, how great was his ignorance Clayton beat him far behind in this most necessary qualification for rising ; but Clayton knew nothing else.

This want of information, or absence of feeling on points so much the life and soul of an Englishman's excitements, made De Vere at first more indifferent than he ought to have been to the possession of the seat in parliament which had been held for him. Had his assistance been wanted upon questions of public, and particularly of foreign policy, he would have been eager enough. But having watched for these questions, he was surprised to find how seldom they seemed to be considered, and how comparatively absorbing was every thing that regarded local interests of which he knew nothing, or the power and influence of particular parties of which he knew little more. He, therefore, without much difficulty acceded to his uncle's request to allow Clayton to sit out the session, at the commencement of which he found him, nor was he sorry to pass the first month of his return in visiting his mother, and the favourite

seat of his childhood at Talbois, for favourite it still was, spite of all the adversity of which it had been the scene.

His friend the President told him he was wrong in this arrangement, and advised his instant entry into the House; but he thought he had time enough before him. He, however, on his return to London acquired, or recovered, so much of his former spirit of curiosity, that he began to visit both Houses as a spectator, and soon became so much interested in the contemplation of what was passing, as to regret that he had consented not yet to be an actor.

At first, he was delighted, and even astonished, by the abilities of the leaders. He was fascinated by the force, the beauty, and the variety of their eloquence. The Premier had been used to speak in thunder, and the thunder still rolled, though only at a distance, while Lord Oldcastle (Lord Eustace's father) calmed his hearers by the smoothness of his periods. But Mr. Wentworth fixed every body, by a flow of language and ideas, which alike charmed the imagination and convinced the understanding. In the Opposition, one great leader was rapid in invective; another dazzled by his wit; a third by the

graces of his fancy, which was so warm that which ever way he moved, graces seemed to drop all around him, and flowers to spring up under his feet.

For some time this was enchanting to a mind like De Vere's, and he longed to possess his seat that he might never be absent from such a feast.

But this was not the longing of Clayton. That prudent young man sought therefore to break the spell which had fascinated his friend. He talked of the tricks of eloquence, and (with a coolness at which himself could not help laughing), of *trading* politicians. Scarcely one in the House, he said, with Walpole, but had his price; and though of some, and even of the great majority, this was a wicked and despicable calumny, the creation of a peer, in the person of one of the most eloquent and active of the Opposition, made a sad inroad in De Vere's political creed. Under the gallery, too, where he sat, he was surrounded with candidates for power and fame, or those who already possessed them, whose mutual criticisms were bitter and caustic. Motives of interest were often assigned, where De Vere hoped only to find freedom and honour. Some were said to be speaking for

particular rewards, some out of particular revenge, and some for bread.

Not a hundredth part of these observations were founded; yet not the less confidently were they hazarded, as party biassed, or disposition inclined.

Thus, by one or other rival, the sincerity of almost every speaker was questioned, except perhaps of some plain dull one, to whom it was no pleasure to listen, and whom nobody regarded.

De Vere was too wise to believe all that was said; but the slander disgusted him with those who uttered it.

The novelty wore off. Rhetoric shewed itself what it is, an art. Technicalities came to be discovered, and the refinements of one evening formed the common places of the next. Even without this, De Vere began to make a question, in which he found little comfort from Clayton, whether the treat of listening to such beautiful figures, such kindling topics as he sometimes heard from the leaders, might not be purchased too dearly at the price of being forced to attend to the crude egotisms of every puny, would-be orator, who chose to hazard them.

The close of the session was thus very differ-

ent from the opening in its effects upon De Vere; and as he was the disciple of no particular school, and attached to no particular leader, he was in danger of relapsing into indifference, or imbibing something worse, in regard to the scenes and actors that surrounded him.

He was however much too just, and still too sanguine, to form any fixed opinions from so short an experience; though he found himself, insensibly perhaps, inclining to think that Harclai's pictures of the world were not quite so overcharged, and Herbert's not quite so correct as he had once believed them to be. At the same time, whether immersed in the pleasures of his age, (of which he drank as largely as any other young man so highly introduced) or engaged in the captivating society of either sex, which courted him, the business of observation went on.

Yet let us not suppose him, on this account, cynical. Open, ardent, and naturally cheerful, he had become gay, and at times even dissipated, in the career of amusement. But even here his mind was always at work; and to watch the windings of the heart, whether in male or female, under whatever shape they presented

themselves, was the never-failing employment of his thoughts.

Our business at present is with his scrutiny of the public characters that surrounded him; and we may suppose that the political associates to whom his uncle introduced him, formed much of his study.

At the dinners of Lord Mowbray (a branch of the art of governing a party by no means to be despised, and which perhaps Lord Mowbray understood better than any other branch), he had opportunities for his curiosity even to sate itself. Many great and many little actors passed there in review, and he early came to distinguish how possible it was for a smooth voice, and much apparent hilarity, to be consistent with great anxiety of mind. It required indeed no peculiar sagacity to do this; and it is mentioned only with a view to account for the backwardness with which he still lent himself to the suggestions of his uncle, on the excitements of the world, and the advantages of ambition.

This backwardness was not a little cherished by Clayton, with whom he continued his habits of confidence, on whom he still relied, and in whom he found a faithful echo of all his rising

sentiments on the manners and governing principles of those around him.

The private Secretary here indeed generally anticipated him; talked of the worry of affairs; the impediments of cunning, and self-interest; the meanness of suitors; the insolence of subalterns; and the coldness of chiefs. He would then glance with feeling at the happiness left at Talbois, and the charms of simple life; nay, would glow with pleasure in painting the comparative independence of even a country vicarage.

De Vere heard him with surprise, but was not so eager as formerly in opposing him. He too had observed, and with a somewhat quicker sense of them, all these objects of Clayton's complaint, and, in particular, the insolence of subalterns, of which more hereafter.

Among the guests, however, whom De Vere met at Lord Mowbray's table, there was one, a Sir William Flowerdale, who gave him satisfaction as well as knowledge. This was a gentleman of good family and great experience and observation (particularly official observation), in which he had been nursed from his youth, till he had long been at the head of a very lucrative department. He was a man of quiet

but excellent understanding, cultivated by reading, and of manners so remarkably tranquil, that during forty years he had never been observed to lose his temper. His office was important, though of a subordinate sort: so that without a power of creating jealousy, his assistance made him necessary to many of the ministers, who all regarded him with good will.

This lot he had enjoyed through several changes of administration, composed of persons of very opposite principles. He had grown old and grown rich under these succeeding administrations: had been created a baronet, and had surveyed many a brilliant meteor in power, whose nod or notice he had once thought honour, but whose children, and perhaps some of themselves, were now his inferiors in the world.

This gentleman enjoyed all the consideration of Lord Mowbray, for his wisdom; though the chief proof of it (and indeed it was no bad one with his lordship) was his success in preserving his place. He almost ranked, he said, with the famous Sir John Petre, the great hero of Lord Mowbray, who during such discordant reigns as Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth, preserved his office of Secretary of State.

"There are no such men now-a-days," would

Lord Mowbray say; "but Flowerdale approaches nearest to them."

To this gentleman then, his habits, and history, Lord Mowbray thought he could not do better than recommend the attention of both De Vere and Clayton. The latter agreed with his patron in thinking Sir William Flowerdale a very sound model for a man like himself to copy; in which, as we speak of the good old times, before fees were brought to account, we may believe him sincere.

De Vere liked Sir William for his own sake, and made him frequent visits, in which the Nestor of office would sometimes engage in (what De Vere would call) a course of political, or rather official lectures, on the right training of obstinate young men, who were so headstrong as to have wills, nay, opinions of their own. This, Sir William would laughingly agree with Lord Mowbray, was subversive of all hope of rising, as it certainly was of all proper discipline, in office; and he gave his advice, where it was needed, accordingly. As the conversation at one of these visits, exhibits much of that practical observation, which no general theory usually comprehends, and as it had much effect, though, perhaps, differently from what was

intended, on De Vere, the reader may possibly excuse us for laying it before him.

At the time we speak of, De Vere found his new friend in his private room. He had just committed a note to the flames, and was studiously watching it to complete destruction, before he could entirely take his eye from it, in order to welcome his guest, though evidently glad to see him.

De Vere observed upon it.

"It is a habit to which I have long accustomed myself," said Sir William, "and at least a provident one, though, in this instance, of little consequence. But *litera scripta*, you know, *semper manet*, and many an office man has found inconvenience before now, from not sufficiently attending to this adage."

"It is, at least, a prudent one," observed De Vere.

"Why, you know," said Sir William, "it was once a maxim with a long-headed statesman, that with a line or two of his hand-writing, and a few concomitant, though trifling circumstances, he could bring any man's life into danger."

"'Twas a dark and infamous maxim," observed De Vere; "but, thank God, calculated

for a dark and wicked age and country, and not for our honest England."

"As for the darkness and wickedness of France, under Cardinal Mazarine," answered Flowerdale, "I will not defend them; but though our laws give us more security, and our time is more enlightened, with such a spirit of party as rages, I would not be careless of any written document that related to politics or a politician, even in our honest England."

"You deserve your reputation for caution," said De Vere; "and no wonder my uncle commends me, as a thoughtless young man, to your protection."

"It is not thoughtlessness that would make me afraid for you," said Flowerdale, with good nature.

"What then?"

"You are young and high born," answered Sir William.

"Ought that to stand in my way?"

"No; both will assist you; for plebeians, and middle aged young gentlemen, after all, are not the subjects most gratifying to the aristocracy to bring forward. But you are high-minded as well as high-born; perhaps I should say, unbending."

"I cannot flatter."

"Flattery is out of the question; but an unbending stiffness of opinion which you are at no pains to conceal—"

"Pains to *conceal!* What! if it be truth? We are told, you know, that to conceal truth, is pretty much the same as to speak falsehood."

"Where your opinion is desired," said the baronet, "that is certainly correct."

"And be assured, my dear Sir William, I will never intrude it where it is not."

"That is but right, too," observed the baronet; "but I am afraid even where it is, it may be thought a good general rule, that a little accommodation in our collisions with others is of no disservice."

"If, by accommodation," replied De Vere, "you mean an outward coincidence of opinion, when we are as wide as the poles asunder within, I see no difference between such accommodation and falsehood."

"To see, now, the difference between two men!" said Flowerdale; "Mr. Clayton I have found far more alive to reason; and he was, as you know, given me as a pupil as well as you."

"I fear," replied De Vere, "your pains will be thrown away upon him, for I know him, and

be assured he will never accommodate his sentimental feelings to those maxims."

Sir William smiled, as much as his mild habits would allow, and replied, "He was here but this morning, and in canvassing the modes by which young men were to rise in the world, I made him perfectly sensible of the wisdom of the maxim—'*Qui nescit dissimulare, nescit regnare.*' * What think you?"

"It is to me a cold-hearted maxim, and I hate it," replied De Vere. "It can only be preferred to the silliness of letting a foolish face, or a tell-tale tongue, blab out one's heart to the winds."

"I honour you for these sentiments," said the Nestor, "which I think are correct, and we have among us some illustrious examples, that there may be statesmen of the first talents, and most profound views, who are above such a close rule of conduct. Nevertheless, it is but fair to tell you there are others who think this rule by no means so contemptible. I own, too, I have observed it, where I least expected it."

"Where?" asked De Vere.

* "He who knows not how to dissemble, knows not how to reign."

"Where the secrets they possess are least worth preserving," replied Flowerdale; "but I have also seen it among the young, and, therefore, as I should have thought, the confiding; men just initiated in office, and candidates for success."

"I could hardly have supposed this," said De Vere; "I would ask you to name them, that I might mark, and avoid them."

"That would exceed the scope of my *lecture*," replied the prudent Sir William. "It is sufficient that I have told you, that the least endowed are those who are sunk deepest in the darkness of this policy; while at the very top, the high-minded Mr. Wentworth, for example, whom you so much admire, is all openness and confidence, and conceals himself the least, of all the great secrets that are confided to him."

"This is charming," said De Vere; "he then, perhaps, is not of opinion with another minister, who has sometimes frightened me with his accounts of things, I mean Lord Chesterfield."

"And what is his opinon?"

"'That we always in business clothe ourselves with dissimulation, because always in business we play with sharpers.'—If this be true, I am not for playing at business at all, any

more than I would play at cards, when I knew that the persons I played with were cheats. At the same time, I do not at present know whom I *am* to play with, ministers, or their dependants."

"None of our *present* ministers are sharpers," said Sir William, "whatever they may have been in other times."

"That is clear," said his pupil; "but their dependants?"

"The word *sharper* is too strong," observed the baronet, "for either principals or dependants; but, of course, subalterns have their own views, and may be jealous of you."

"And do you mean, that on that account, I am to *accommodate* myself, as you call it, to second-rate people?"

Sir William smiled at the sort of haughtiness with which this was said, when De Vere continued, "I could bear to do homage to my chief; but to be at the mercy of fellow underlings, no better than myself——"

"Perhaps, not so good," observed the baronet.

"Bear with me, then," proceeded De Vere, "if I say I could not submit to it."

"Yet are they not to be slighted," observed the baronet. "They have the ear of their principals; the *mollia tempora*, when a good word, or a bad word is of more consequence than may be thought; in short, they have the power of representation——"

"Or misrepresentation," cried De Vere, with some indignation. "Is it thus that you mean they may abuse their power?"

"As to abusing it," replied Sir William, "at best they are but men."

"And are these then the persons, Mr. Grantley, for instance," (and he mentioned a gentleman in an inferior office,) "to whom you think me unbending, because I will not court them?"

"Court, perhaps, is not the word," replied the Nestor, "especially for you; though I have seen higher men, (excuse me,) on their knees before even second rate people."

"On their knees!" cried De Vere; "I will at least never be one of them; and if this is the price of preferment, like the country mouse,

'Give me again my hollow tree,
A crust of bread, and liberty.'"

"Very good," said Flowerdale; "but if you will do me the honour to attend to me——"

"I do, I do," cried De Vere, much abstracted.

"Yes!" returned the baronet, "pretty much as Hotspur did to his father and uncle, after he had been affronted by the king."

"Nay, I stand corrected," replied De Vere, laughing almost at himself; "but I confess that to owe preferment, or even a step towards it, through some of these men, would be worse than to lose it altogether."

"Very true," said Sir William, "but considering ——"

"Were they in the least of a superior order," again interrupted De Vere; "but to think how possible it is to be a tyrant in the closet, and an abortion everywhere else. No! even an arrogant, if a real statesman, I might suffer, but —"

"You are certainly quite attentive," observed Flowerdale, laughing.

"Forgive me," returned De Vere, "I am all ear."

"Men have different talents," said Sir William, calmly; "some may be to be useful in private, though they may fail in public."

"Then let them be buried in private,' exclaimed De Vere, "for about such men I think with Pope, who says, 'As for the really great,

one expects mischief from kites and eagles, *but to be squirted to death by understrappers*, would provoke as dull a dog as Phillips himself."*

Flowerdale laughed, but De Vere asked if he did not think it horrible?

"You do not, I see, like it," observed Flowerdale.

"I know not if it most frightens, disgusts, or affronts me," answered De Vere.

"These are but slight evils after all," observed Sir William; "and here also there can, and ought to be, no sweeping condemnations. There may, and must be honourable seconds, as well as honourable principals."

"I agree," said De Vere; "and were all, for example, like yourself, ministers would have more justice done them. But an honourable man will not easily stoop to subordinate presumption, which throws a sort of discredit, unjust as it may be, on the chiefs themselves. No! I would be buried fifty fathom deep first."

The baronet again smiled at his eager indignation, and coolly said, "This at least ought not to drive you from politics."

"I fear," answered De Vere, "it will not

* See Pope's Works, xi. 67.

cure the *unbending* disposition, which you set out with blaming."

"Well," observed Flowerdale mildly; "I will allow you what jealousy you please towards your brother subalterns that are to be; but I trust I need not caution you to be less stiff towards general officers, particularly the general on whose staff you may happen to find yourself."

"I trust I shall know, and, knowing, perform my duty," said De Vere.

"From my heart I believe you intend it," answered Flowerdale; "but forgive me if I remind you that once entered on service, the civil is like the military superior—he will require *obedience*, not opinion. And trust me, for a subaltern to disagree with his chief, whether of a party, or in office, nothing can be more inconvenient, I had almost said more dangerous."

"Dangerous to what? is the question," said De Vere.

"To his *advancement*," answered the baronet.

"The advancement I seek," replied De Vere, with some dignity, "is not that whieh is to be purchased by the surrender of one's good faith."

"If by good faith is meant opinions," observed the man of years, with a smile, "my meaning rather is, that there should be no faith at all, except in one's patron."

"I now understand you," said De Vere, with great earnestness, "and it is fit, if you will bear with me, that as to myself, I undeceive you. That I must serve at my years is clear; since I have nothing heaven-born about me, either civil or military. But, with submission, there is a difference between a chief and a patron. The first, when placed under him, I will of course obey, as an officer obeys the general set over him by his prince; but in the train of the last I will never be found."

"Go on," said Sir William, pleased with his energy.

"If I am admitted on a staff, *on account* of my opinions," continued De Vere, "cheerfully will I give my obedience; but if I am to form, to change, or to renounce opinions, *because* I am on the staff, adieu (and willingly) to the advancement you speak of. And this is what I conceive no enlightened statesman, no generous leader of a party, no liberal head of office, but would as readily grant, as I should require it."

"This is all excellent," cried Sir William,

catching a little of the spirit of his pupil; in truth, neither accustomed nor expecting to meet with so much reason in his fire. "Let me, however, apprise you of what few young senators, when they come into office, seem aware of, but which they nevertheless feel, as you, of all others, seem formed to feel it."

"For heaven's sake what?"

"*In* the House, you fancy yourselves equal to your future chief: nay, in your vote, your freedom of speech, and sometimes possibly in your powers, you are so. But *out* of the House all is metamorphosed. From having had a free partnership, as it were, in a subject, you are reduced to be a mere clerk; must be simply a hand, and whatever business is confided to you, 'give it an understanding, but no tongue.' Thus, from a supposed high-minded statesman in the senate, counselling, if not directing affairs, it is even your duty to become a passive instrument and a mute. Are you prepared to be such a person? to be always directed, never consulted?"

"The picture is certainly not inviting," said De Vere, "and I see it must depend upon the character of the chief, to make the lot of the subaltern dignified and happy, or commonly bear-

able. But are there not such chiefs (observe, I do not say patrons) as I have imagined? Men, who from having liberally served, have taught themselves liberally to command?"

"There are," said Sir William; "and amongst the highest and most gifted of our governors. There are also of an opposite cast."

"The first alone are the men I will court," replied De Vere. "Let those seek masters (nor do I blame them) who are obliged to seek bread. And now," continued he, relaxing from the sort of severity into which he had fallen, and with even a laugh on his cheek, "tell me some other of your general rules."

"Whether with chief or patron," replied the Nestor, "not to miscalculate one's strength, nor suppose, because one cannot follow, that therefore one can lead."

"An excellent distinction," cried De Vere; "and what would be the consequence?"

"Such men are whistled down the wind, and heard of no more."

"'Ambition that o'erleaps itself,'" said De Vere.

"Exactly so."

"But even with persons of seeming weight, nay, even of talents," continued Sir William,

"it is sometimes inconceivable how small the distance is, in the balancing of fortune, between absolute proscription and the highest promotion; between contemptuous neglect, and the Privy Council itself."

"What, in this country?" asked De Vere; "in Turkey or Spain I could conceive it."

"There are instances before one's eyes," replied Flowerdale; "and it is a mistake to suppose that political ambition presents not as bitter a cup in England as elsewhere."

De Vere was pondering these words when the baronet continued: "I have this moment been contributing my mite to save a man from a gaol, who once figured in parliament, and was my superior in office."

De Vere, somewhat moved, asked his history.

"Under the last administration," answered Sir William, "he shewed some talent, and his heart beat high with pride. But though he spoke for ministers in public he rebelled in private, and being cautioned, gave himself airs. In fact, led away by what he called spirit, but what was really vanity, he miscalculated his strength. He was abandoned, and not improperly, by his patrons, whom he had used ill; his whole con-

sequence was extinguished; and he is now lamenting, with many other mistaken people, the total neglect of that world in which he once thought to shine."

"He brought his calamity on himself," said De Vere, "yet it is a lamentable picture;" and he could not help again musing on his hollow tree.

"Take a contrast to this," said the baronet, "in one of our high placemen, with whom you are acquainted. In the last administration, after long and useful service, he openly complained, and with reason, that promised rewards were withheld. The Treasury cried mutiny; the secretaries caught the alarm; the very clerks barked punishment. In short, the minister of the day turned his back upon him, intending to leave him also to fortune. But he could not contrive to crush him; the gentleman had abilities, and made a high demonstration. The old government broke up, and the consequence was an immense and immediate promotion under the new one."

"You paint these revolutions with force," said De Vere, "and I dare say I shall profit by them; but whether by assuming complaisance where I otherwise should not do so, or by pre-

paring for a proper retreat, is a problem to be solved."

"I trust, at your age," returned Sir William, "that retreat is out of the question;" and De Vere, thanking him for his confidence, the visit ended.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FEARS OF INEXPERIENCE.

Oh! how full of briars is this working-day world!
They are but burs, cousin.

SHAKSPEARE.

De Vere began now to think he had had opportunities of observing, that, although a general busy interest, exciting to the spirits, was presented on the face of public life, what he had heard and read of the hollowness of courtiers did not seem entirely unfounded. Had he at that time gone deeper, as he afterwards did, he might have made discoveries to the full as cogent on the other side, and come to the more pleasing conclusion, that as much worth, honour, openness, and even simplicity of character, are to be found among men of power and of business, though that business be politics, as in less prominent, though not less selfish professions.

To these we may hereafter come; meantime it may not be amiss to remark, that from the very nature of state affairs, it should seem, in the abstract, that the labours of those who administer them are absorbed by business that is the least selfish, because, from the mere force of the terms, it is the business of the common weal, and not their own. It is, however, too certain, that *in this outset* of his life, the specimens of ambition which his friend Dr. Herbert had taught him to hope for, were not those which exactly met his view; and what he did contemplate were those which least supported the engaging theories of the most sanguine of his guardians.

As he maintained a correspondence with both, he did not fail to notice this, and the following extracts of his letters to Herbert exhibit a picture of his mind at this time, which may not be unimportant.

"All your precepts seem thrown away upon your refractory ward. I bow to your superior experience of mankind; I acknowledge you have many practical philosophers on your side; you have the Temples, Addisons, and Mainwarings to back you, and you count upon my being among them. But should you not also count

upon my disposition? If that oppose, of what avail are the rest?

"You urge me without delay to parliament; scold me for not attending the *levée;* ridicule my not paying court to the ministers, and laugh at my slighting the syrens of politics; for, as you observe, there are syrens in them as well as in love. Thus, you are angry with me for holding at naught those assemblies and suppers of the two peeresses who head the rival parties, the *entrée* to which is so sighed for by less fortunate persons than myself. Now, who would think this the instruction of a grave guardian, who, as some would say, ought to warn inexperienced youth from the dangers of the world, instead of holding it up as an object of their attraction?

"The worst of it is, I feel that you are right. We ordinary spirits must follow the beaten path to obtain distinction. It is only for genius and high aspirations to take that easy leap after honour which Hotspur talks of.

"But then, after all, is distinction necessarily happiness? Is it *indispensable* to be distinguished? And what really is it? I live among distinguished persons; I see heroes,

statesmen, orators, poets; I have friends who have acquired, some power, some riches; all are in full career. Yet, as they arrive at the goal, all seem to me to be disappointed. To be sure, there is an eagerness, an excitement in the race, which looks less unhappy; but I see the nerves stretch, the veins swell, the features distorted. Each man wishes to stop, or to pass his fellow.

"You will tell me these are the views of Harclai, who sees falsely; at any rate, it ought not to influence the opinion of an ingenuous young man, who has, perhaps, too much feeling in his soul, and too little money in his pocket; and you say justly that any thing is better than—

'Living dully, sluggardized at home,
Wear out your youth in shapeless idleness.'

Be assured that this will not be my choice. Were the world still in arms, my old wish would revive, and my father's sword, which now sleeps, would perhaps be at my side; but the world sleeps too. You, indeed, tell me my sphere is politics, which open the mind. Alas! do they so? Do they not rather, as now pursued, contract all into party?

"'Tis true, there is genius and commanding

eloquence in the highest quarters, and I have worshipped both (perhaps secretly envied the possessors), when I have listened to them in the senate. But out of the senate, I have seen them perpetually in trammels; clouded, burthened, and bowed with the weight of affairs.

"I speak feelingly, because I lately met your friend, Mr. Wentworth, at Sir George Deloraine's, in the full flow of his wit, and pouring out a mind which seemed not more brilliant than amiable upon all subjects most engaging to man. The contrast between such moments, and those passed with pure politicians, is, I assure you, not lost upon me. Sir George is, himself, an example of the happiness of a refined mind unfettered by state reserve. Do you think it is the same with the dryness and closeness of my uncle's dinners? where the affected '*volto sciolto*,' only makes one dread the more, the '*pensieri stretti*,' so much vaunted and recommended by politicians. Mr. Wentworth, though a minister, is, on these occasions, as different from himself as light and darkness.

"Those who succeed, complain; those who do not, complain; both, that they are slaves; only there is this difference in the lot of the last, that they have to deplore the addition of disap-

pointment to their slavery. It is this disappointment which, like a cold spectre, lays his hand upon all within his reach, and sends shivering and death into the heart's core. It is this that frightens, deters, and finally unnerves me. You tell me of success. Alas! are the successful happy? Is it known at what expence of health, of quiet, and, with some, even of honour, they have succeeded? Have they preserved their friends? Have they betrayed no principles? Has no obloquy followed them? Or, if really prosperous—are they content? Do not new cares succeed, greater, perhaps, than any they had before? I confine not this to political ambition: look at arms, or arts, or learning; even the lover that sighed like a furnace! Marry him, and the fear that made him sigh is at an end—but so is his hope!

"To tell you a secret, the only thing in which I agree with you, is about this Hope. Dear, delightful, mysterious, ever-whispering, ever-exciting being! evanescent, yet seldom absent—thou alone gladdenest the heart of man! Yes! of Hope, I am the willing, ardent, and active votary; but to continue so, she must, like her kinswoman, Fancy, be perpetually changing. Her dress, shape, and features,

must vary every hour. Her charming colours must be like those of the camelion. Never must I catch, or at least never hold her. No; for ever let her be near, but for ever elude me. Once embraced, her power is gone."

Such were portions of De Vere's letters to Herbert.

We will not lay before our readers, at length, the answers which the clear-sighted philosopher of the world, alarmed for his pupil, gave him. It is sufficient to say that they were worthy his good sense, and that they particularly cautioned De Vere against what was evidently a hasty, and probably an unfounded judgment.

"It will be hard," said the President, "if he who can appreciate and characterize so well, the lovely being you address by the name of Hope, should be disappointed after all. But still harder, if it prove your own fault. I beseech you not to fall into the common-place error of involving all the rivals for power who surround you, in one sweeping condemnation, for the faults of a few. That there are envy, hatred, and malice in a court, and in the anti-chamber of a minister, is most true; but so there are in a camp, in the church, in commerce, at the bar, in the pure fields themselves, and even in the

lonely cloister, where passion, having done with the world, seems to sleep. And yet you yourself have hitherto met with none of that treachery you have taught yourself to fear; and to avoid all danger of it, if I might advise, I would address myself only to those who are at the fountain head. Introduced as you are, I would put myself in nobody's power, but those who have the distribution of power; for, be assured, *second-hand* patronage cannot be more revolting to your own high spirit, than it is contrary to good policy. It was this just appreciation of himself, that at once placed our friend, Mr. Wentworth, so high.

"You tell me yourself, that in the heads of departments you see much to admire, and you do not contravene what I have told you, that in many of the ministers themselves you find, not merely the talents required for their stations, but the honesty, feeling, and even the singleness of heart, which vulgar and hacknied prejudice would confine to inferior classes: Never was there such a mistake as this prejudice. However, I have allowed that you may meet with instances of the contrary where you are, and these you may surely surmount, as they are surmounted by others, when they appear,

as they indubitably do, in all the lower stations, as well as in the higher.

"You will, perhaps, think all this the representation of a man who upholds a particular opinion, and is afraid for his theory; I will therefore give you something practical from a man surely, if ever there was one, practised in courts, and writing from their very hot-bed. Such, you will allow, was Lord Bolingbroke. Indeed, you remind me forcibly (be not affronted) of his pupil and kinsman, the young Earl of Jersey, to whom (when he was in a similar fit of spleen) he writes as follows:

"'You have your mortifications before you come to court, and believe me you will have them when you come there. *You will see the fawning tell-tale rascal caressed, and detraction from the merit of others made equivalent to real merit in himself.* You will see a great deal more than I intend to enumerate; and what then? *Must, therefore, a good man not come to court, nor step forward in the service of his country?* Must he throw himself into retreat or opposition? No; you are too *bright* for the former, and too *honest* for the latter.

"'There seems to be no inclination to live well with you wanting. We have not the best

knack in the world, either at giving our employments with a good grace, or suiting them well. Fight against your spleen. I know how fast that sly enemy will creep into the mind and body of man, and what cursed work he will make when he is there !' "*

Such were the topics used by the experienced and observing Herbert, to arm the man he honoured more than any young person of whom he had had the direction, against the obstacles to success which might be presented by his own, perhaps morbid imagination.

That imagination was now, however, to be very differently exercised; and far other dreams than those of ambition, successful or unsuccessful, were about to illumine his fancy, and take possession of his heart.

We have said that he was alive to the pleasures of his age; and he was so particularly to those which the softer sex are so powerful in creating. With all his reflection, his indeed

* Bolingbroke to Lord Jersey, Correspond. 2. The letter is here much curtailed ; but it is so admirable a piece of persuasion against the common-place supposition that the court is a bugbear of corruption, that it would be well worth the reader's while (particularly if a young one,) to study the whole paper.

was a heart of sensibility in the most eminent degree; though, from his turn of thought, and disposition to romance, fostered and heightened by the earlier habits of his life, his was a sensibility which made larger demands upon female excellence than were usually, or, indeed, easily satisfied. Rustic as he had been, rusticity (as we have seen,) could not please him, even at an age when beauty of almost any kind pleases. But neither did *polished* beauty, as it is called, fare much better. The smoothness of artificial manners, and general elegance of dress and appearance, at first so charming to the eye, began early to lose their power; since beyond the eye (with De Vere at least), they seldom advanced. In the country every thing was too glaring—here, every thing too much veiled.

What he peculiarly required was character; without which (such as he admired, and had formed himself to love,) the enchantments of the most perfect beauty lived but for an hour. But this character he laboured in vain to discover, where all was cased under an impenetrable outward uniformity of manners, court polish, and court pretensions.

This was his opinion, and this opinion laid hold of him even in the spring of his youth—

"When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns,
Brisk as the April buds in primrose season."

In short, at five-and-twenty, with a keen sense of pleasure, he had as serious a mind in regard to women, as to every thing else; and though his eye was often pleased, and his senses otherwise charmed by the fascinations of the society in which he lived, there was a void in his heart which he could not account for, even to himself. In fact, his hour was not yet come.

CHAPTER XVI.

FIRST LOVE.

Back, shepherds, back ; enough your play,
Till the next sunshine holiday.
Here be, without duck or nod,
Other trippings to be trod,
Of lighter toes, and such court guise,
As Mercury did first devise,
With the mincing Dryades,
O'er the lawns and o'er the leas.

MILTON.

No! his hour was not yet come, but it was not long to be delayed. For the reader must not suppose that such a heart as we have described, was insensible, merely because it was difficult to be won ; or that what the models which the females he had hitherto seen had not been able to afford, the sex itself could not supply. Pure country simplicity, or pure town refinement, could not satisfy De Vere; and the mixture of the two, such as his heart craved, and his reason wished, was a happiness of which he began to despair. But, besides this, he felt

how much the sphere of choice was narrowed by his want of sufficient fortune; since the thought that he might be dazzled into love by either the consequence or the wealth of the female who might move him, filled him with horror.

He had, therefore, formed to himself not only the hope, but the expectation of being able to pass through life, or at least till fortune smiled upon him, with the same stoical independence of the sex which he had hitherto shewn, and to which his difficult tastes had not a little contributed.

All this, however, was on the point of giving way before he was aware of it; and the danger arose from a quarter, and in a place where, from being least expected, he was least on his guard.

It was at the ball of the Litchfield races that De Vere's heart was doomed to meet its virgin encounter; and he was not the less excited, or the less pleased, from the circumstance that his admiration was kindled by an object, at the moment when he saw her, perfectly unknown to him.

He had arrived too late for the first day's sport, or indeed to dine with his uncle, Lord

Mowbray, as was expected. He dressed therefore at his inn, sending a compliment to his uncle, whom he said he would join in the ball-room. To this he repaired as dancing had just begun, and as Lord Mowbray did not appear, and he was known to no one, he gave his eyes and ears to the dancers in pure lack of employment. As it happened, no pastime could suit him better, for he loved to observe a dance; very different in this from his friend Dr. Herbert, who had sometimes been known to say, he thought dancing only an awkward way of getting from one end of a room to the other.

Certain it is, however, that the graceful harmony produced by the exact correspondence of motion with sound, which constitutes good dancing, gave De Vere a pleasure which went much farther than his ears or eyes. It affected even his sentiment, as all harmony will, and thus interested the judgment itself. Let us not be supposed by this to refine too much upon a trivial matter. A treatise might be written on the effect of elegant motion on the mind of a lover of elegance; by which word elegance, is not meant the costly glare of riches, but something always the effect of proper proportion in

whatever is the subject matter, and which interests from that very circumstance; and the sense of this proportion constitutes what is called taste.

In respect to dancing, it admits of such varieties, and its harmonies may be sometimes so magnificent, sometimes so simple, and pathetic, that, unlike the good doctor, a learned bishop, celebrated for his love of Greek tragedy, having, before his elevation, seen the ballet of Medea and Jason, was known to say, that next to the mental delight of reading the story in Euripides, was certainly that of seeing it at the opera.

I have permitted this little digression, in order to account for the peculiar pleasure of De Vere, both in dancing himself, and seeing others dance. But as the pleasure emanated from an elegance of mind, so elegance in performance was absolutely necessary to engage his attention. It must be owned, therefore, that in our good homely island, his attention was seldom repaid; nay, that his taste was oftener a source of disgust than of pleasure to him; for with all our good qualities, ours never was, and never will be, a dancing nation.

In the ball-room of the Litchfield races, we

fear this was most cruelly proved: for De Vere roamed from one awkwardness to another, and from one personification of hoydenism to another of affectation, till at last he threw himself on a bench in despair.

For the honour of the county of Stafford, however, be it observed, that this was at a time when our worthy ancestor squires were not in the habit of taking their wives and daughters with them to town, to attend upon fashion, while they attended upon parliament. No! with what real inferiority as to character and happiness we know not; but the province of their females was home. They read their bibles, and the Sir Charles Grandisons of their time, distilled rose and mint, and could ride you fifty miles in a day, though they had never, like their posterity, seen Vestris or Le Pique, Rossi or Dorival, nor attempted to squall "Che faro."* What wonder then if a race ball to them was a revelry, as much as a dance in a barn to their labourers, and enjoyed with equal sincerity by both?

Unfortunately De Vere's fine taste could not

* The present generation will possibly not understand these fine names, illustrious in their time; but let it be recollected, that I write to my veteran contemporaries, the Will Honeycombs, and Lord Oglebys of a former age.

bear this sincerity, as it actually then shewed itself, though he would have been amused, had not his good-nature been shocked when he heard the sheriff of the county, a man eminent on turf and field, thanking a young Londoner for dancing with his dowdy daughter.

"I know," said he, "she is heavy in hand, and bores with the head; the snaffle won't do; but keep a tight curb, and stick the spurs well in, and I'll warrant she'll get to the bottom."

The poor girl blushed, but did her best, and got rid of the gibe as well as she could, by observing, "Papa is always so funny."

Young as De Vere was, he gave the matter up, and longed more than ever for the arrival of his uncle's party, when he beheld a young lady led up to the top of the dance, on whom he found his eye could not look without instant emotion. The most perfect form he had ever beheld, set off by the most graceful manner he had ever admired, challenged his curiosity, and gratified all his sentiment. Had she been plain, this would have been the instant effect upon one of De Vere's particular taste, which sought for its pleasure more in elegance of shape and address than even in beauty itself. But her face and features were illumined with a meaning of

such powerful expression; there were in them such sense and softness united, that a man of sense could not fail to admire, a man of feeling, to love.

Her complexion might be said to be naturally pale, but of such dazzling fineness, that you hardly wished for colour, till it came. Then, indeed, the animation which it caused, and the intelligence which flashed from a dark and languishing eye, gave her a loveliness of expression, such as we may suppose to belong to the angels. Luckily, the least exercise, and even the play of her mind in conversation, always called up this beautiful colour.

De Vere was upon his legs in a moment. He had no eyes, but for this lovely vision—for such it seemed. He could not even ask her name, so much was he fixed; for, from being all eye, he could find no tongue. When she began to move, his peculiar taste was peculiarly pleased; for never were grace and dignity so exemplified. Perhaps, she might have been thought too serious in her dancing; by those who did not, like De Vere, mark the elasticity of her foot, and a something, as the strain of the music changed, which amounted almost to playfulness.

Those who may have seen the dancing of

the Ladies L——, in their girlhood, or of Lady Eleanor F——, can alone have an idea of it, by supposing the beautiful style of each united. It is this perfection of cheerfulness and grace conjoined, which our critical neighbours over the water have, with a happiness of language, described under the phrase of "*le beau tranquille.*"

De Vere followed her from the top of the dance to the bottom, and from the bottom to the top, and was pleased to observe the respect, which, when modest *retenue* is joined with grace, attends upon it almost as by a natural law. The rural thanes and their families opened every where to give her place, all apparently actuated with the same admiration as De Vere. It seemed, indeed, as she floated through the mazes of the figure, that all were content to acknowledge her superiority, and gazed upon her as if she had been

"A fairy vision
Of some gay creature of the element,
That i' the colours of the rainbow lives,
And plays i' the plighted clouds."

We may suppose how this told upon the senses of De Vere; nor were his eyes charmed more than his mind, on observing the easy, yet correct attention with which she listened to the

conversation of her partner. De Vere envied him much for his then lot, and not a little for a certain *tournure* of fashionable self-consequence, which seemed only the result of acknowledged superiority in rank and manners, and to which a few years seniority to De Vere in age, gave some little addition.

It was hence (and he saw it with something like envy), that he thought the lady listened with a mixture of deference, as well as pleasure, to his conversation. It is astonishing what sensations of unaccountable rivalry (for they were no less), this caused to De Vere.

Let those who study human nature, explain it if they can; when they reflect that it was produced by two persons whom he had only seen that moment, and of whose existence he had till then been ignorant. Yet, so it was; though even then, the Orlando spirit of his character spoke to his agitated heart; and as Correggio is said, on viewing a picture by Raphael, to have exclaimed with a noble self-confidence, "*Ed Io sono pittore,*" so this aspiring youth whispered to himself, "and I also am a gentleman." In short, though he was certainly struck with awe, he was not plunged in despair; for as the deepest admiration

seemed in an instant to take possession of his young bosom, so he was ready and eager to enter all lists in the assertion of it.

If any one censure this as romantic or unnatural, we doubt if the censure is deserved. Romantic it may be, if all which is out of the ordinary course is romantic; but we deny the unnatural. For even though love at first sight has often, and not improperly, been laughed at, as the green longing of girls and boys, who forget one another as suddenly as they like; yet the sweetest and most lasting affection has often grown out of it, when happy circumstances have concurred for its cultivation. (He who writes, has himself felt it home.)

De Vere certainly did not stay to examine this. He knew nothing about the passion of love, and as little of the nature of his own feeling. He only knew that the beauty he had admired, seemed of so superior an order, that he could have kissed the ground she so lightly touched, and still more the airy foot that touched it.

He was roused from the sort of trance into which his admiration had thrown him, by the address of the only person in the room whom he knew, and who, in almost equal admiration,

asked him if he could tell him who this distinguished stranger was.

"I would myself give the world to know," replied he, "for exclusive of her being the most charming person I ever saw, she puzzles me more than I can describe."

"How so?"

"Why, I would stake my existence that she never was bred in London, if she even ever saw it; yet that the country should produce such a creature, shames probability."

"I admire your penetration, Sir," exclaimed an unknown gentleman who overheard him, "for she has scarcely seen London, and though bred for the last two or three years in the country, it was chiefly in France, and under her relation the Marchioness of Clanellan, the best woman, and one of the most accomplished persons in Europe."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed De Vere, in perturbation, "the Marchioness of Clanellan! and her name is——"

"Lady Constance Mowbray," replied the gentleman, "daughter of the Earl."

The reader must figure to himself De Vere's joy as well as surprise when he heard this, and found in the elegant person who had so moved

him, that beautiful cousin, to be presented to whom, was the very object of his visit to Litchfield. An involuntary and slight bow was the immediate consequence of the information thus afforded him; surprised at which, she gave him a glance which only moved him more. It was one of those glances which we suppose every one has felt once, perhaps twice in his life, and which demonstrate the sudden power of woman over the heart of man; but which, though its language is clear, and its effects lasting, no one, to another, can ever translate.

A blush, but like any thing rather than that of Cymon, instantly suffused the cheek of De Vere. At the same time this caused something like constraint on her side, when, to the satisfaction of both, Lord Mowbray, who had till now been closeted with the county member in an adjoining room, advanced, and after chiding De Vere for not having come time enough to call upon him previous to the ball, introduced him in form to his daughter, as the cousin of whom she had heard so much.

And heard of him she had for years, and with an interest, which, had De Vere known it, would have thrilled his heart. Lady Constance had, in fact, known much, if not all the early

history of her sylvan cousin. From the age of twelve, she had been allowed occasionally to visit her aunt, Lady Eleanor, for whom she had so much veneration as to engage with her, at her own desire, in a correspondence, which, notwithstanding the disparity of years, was gratifying to both. Hence the secrets of the moated house were not unknown to her. Their history produced a considerable effect upon her disposition towards the elder De Vere when alive, whom she could not help regarding with an indignation, which at her years was even surprising—so early did she begin to feel the movements of a generous heart.

At the early age of fifteen, such was her energy, such the dignity of her manner, that, all man of the world as he was, the elder De Vere never saw her but he felt a constraint which he did not like to confess.

As her years opened, and her mind unfolded, this firmness and disposition to think for herself, advanced in proportion; and as her father was very like his eldest nephew in character, so she did not seem far from what has been described as belonging to her aunt.

This made the oppression of the moated house a constant theme of interest whenever she could

talk of it: and at any rate fixed it in her thoughts; so that the rustic Orson (as with all his high qualities she could not help fancying him), was uppermost with her, long, very long before she thus met him. But she had had no conception that nature alone could have done so much for any man. She had been struck with him before, when he eyed her in the dance, and, (for we must confess that so it was) she had felt something like a wish (an unconscious one, perhaps, but still a wish,) that he might be eyeing her with approbation. His person was so markedly fine, and his countenance so full of meaning, that she could not help wondering who he was; and the look that has been described, which she gave him in return for the sort of unobvious involuntary bow which had escaped from him on the discovery of her name, was the effect of a secret hope which she could not help entertaining, that he might be the cousin she expected to see.

I have often heard De Vere say, that the evening of the Litchfield ball was the most exciting of his life; that he never was so pleased, or so anxious to please; and that for hours he was in delirium. His pleasure in his cousin was then indeed unmixed, and it continued unal-

loyed for many of the first weeks of their acquaintance; during which, they visited Lady Eleanor, at Talbois, and he accompanied them to Castle Mowbray. It was here that Constance disclosed to him all the sympathy his early adversity had caused; all the interest which, even as a child, she had taken in his struggles, and the approbation and almost admiration she had given to the firm assertion of himself which he had displayed.

Was Lady Constance wise in this? I believe not. But she was no common person. With a gentleness that was delicious, she had high virtues, and lofty qualities: and, without any thing approaching to eccentricity, without departing one point, or one instant from the purest grace of modesty, her ingenuousness and natural truth (most alive, and least timorous at her young age), made disguise or concealment impossible. She had no mother to advise with; and exclusive of this, her original and peculiar independence of mind, made her feel above the little scruples (which we do not blame mothers for inculcating), as to the confidence which ought to exist between young persons of different sexes.

De Vere was little past five-and-twenty when

the introduction at Litchfield took place, and he afterwards spent near three months of the summer at Castle Mowbray; a period most critical to his feelings, if not to his destiny. If any one doubt the possibility of this, let him read no farther, for he knows not the heart of man. If he does know it, he needs nothing to convince him, that not merely three months, but three days, nay, even three hours, may sometimes suffice to produce what may ultimately influence his character, and colour his fate.

But though the deep print of his cousin's beauty, and still more of her grace, was stamped on the imagination of De Vere in the very first hour of their acquaintance, yet his was not a heart to be won for ever, by the force of beauty alone.

I know not, indeed, if the utmost dignity of mien or countenance, is calculated to win more, than that admiring respect, which was always the first sentiment inspired by this heiress of the Mowbrays. Something more winning soft, more amiably mild, is necessary for love to wind its way into the heart of man; and this winning softness, this amiable mildness, De Vere found afterwards in his cousin, to the extent of his wishes, with all beside which even *his* mind

could covet. A very few days, indeed, were necessary to show that the imposing air, which at first had so fixed him, by no means disclosed the whole varied expression of her features, much less developed the real nature of her character.

A penetration, far beyond her years, yet mingled with the greatest goodness, and a cheerfulness amounting sometimes even to archness, had at least equal claims on his admiration. Upon a first approach, especially if alone, there was that look of sedateness, if not of languor, which always attends the beautiful oval of countenance, and forms what appears a pensive brow. But the *abord* over, and conversation begun (if to her liking), the look of seriousness was lost, and tints of such glowing animation lighted up a mouth of rose and ivory mixed, in such beautiful play, that no two faces could seem so variable (I had almost said so unlike) as that of the individual, but always lovely Constance. Do I paint from fancy? Alas! No! I have seen it! loved it! lost it!

It was hence that in the world, Constance had two characters. She was for ever elegant and beautiful, because she could not change her nature; always self-possessed, because always full

of sense; but the character of her beauty, and, by consequence of her mind, was very differently estimated. To persons who, from having no character, were indifferent to her, or still more if possessing one that excited her dislike, she was lofty and distant. But to those she approved, and much more if she loved them, how delightfully did she display her nature, in a softness mixed with cheerfulness, which few could withstand! It was this that formed her peculiar charm, and seemed a perpetual May, spreading sunshine, and breathing balm on all around. In truth she was a creature formed alike to give lustre to a throne, or bless the seclusion of the humblest lover.

CHAPTER XVII.

She might lie by an emperor's side
And command him tasks.

SHAKSPEARE.

THERE was, at Castle Mowbray, a dairy-house which De Vere's mother, in the days of her favour with her father, had been allowed to erect. It was not of marble, nor were the dishes porcelain, such as befit a quality dairy, in which a little fortune is sunk for ever to enable some duchess to play at milkmaids for an hour. It reared a pretty, but moderate front, on the green bank of a warbling brook, that glided through the park, tributary to the Trent. Hazles and copse-wood fringed its lower border, while some lofty acacias prevented injury from the meridian sun. A plot of velvet turf surrounded the house, and this again was bordered

with flowers, whose sweetness was fed upon by a thousand bees. There were, at least, a score of hives, from which this favourite spot was as often called the apiary, as the dairy. From the murmuring of the stream, the hum of the insects, and the otherwise happy quiet of the whole scene, it was a place where Virgil might have sung till he forgot himself in sleep.

The keeping and elegance of the inclosure were lost with Lady Eleanor; though the dairy was always known in the family, after her departure, as *her* house. When Constance came, it was overrun with weeds, yet it was a spot—

> "Where once the garden smiled,
> And still where many a garden flower grows wild."

It had been known and loved by Constance in her childhood, when she visited it with her aunt, and was sought out and restored, with all the fondness of an old friend, when she returned a woman to Castle Mowbray.

The improvements were not quite finished, when De Vere accompanied the family from the eventful race ball, and we may suppose that he was not unobservant of the pleasure his cousin felt, and the taste she displayed in their completion. One small room, a garden parlour, of

which her aunt had been very fond, was restored entirely to its former neatness, after having been the lodge of one of the park-keepers; and to this she would often retire, particularly in the heat of the day, to store her mind by study, or meditate upon scenes that were past, or prospects to come. She was, in truth, always very happy in this seclusion.

This, however, did not at all interfere with either her admiration or her enjoyment of the fine old seat of her ancestors, the castle itself. Without, there was a magnificent terrace, almost equal to Windsor or Belvoir, from the vastness and beauty of its view. Within, the proud towers and massive walls which overhung the park, and which every traveller stopped to view and longed to visit, were the containing boundaries of suites of apartments, furnished in all the costliness of ancient splendour.

"You love all this, *ma cousine*," said Mortimer to her, one day, when she was admiring the spaciousness of the ancient guard-room, now converted into a saloon, and hung with the gayest colours of Gobeline tapestry.

"I do," said she, "and so well, that I would wish to fill it better than with so small a party as ours. We seem lost in it."

"But yet you love the dairy-house?" observed Mortimer, with something like scrutiny.

"Oh, dear! yes; love it dearly. My garden-room is charmingly finished, and I give you leave now to see it whenever, and as soon as you please. In fact, I want your opinion. But then I love this too," (and she looked round with pleasure). "Indeed, as its inhabitant, I should be sorry not to prefer it."

"As its present mistress, and destined owner, I should be sorry too," said Mortimer. "In other times you would have kept a little court here, and been 'the Cynosure of neighbouring eyes.'"

"That would have been delightful," said Constance; "and we would have had tournaments, and you should have been my knight."

"Gladly," answered De Vere; "but what should we then have done with the dairy-house?"

"It would have made an excellent hermitage," answered Constance, "and I would have gone there every day to tell my beads, confess, and be happy."

"And return to be happy at the castle?"

"And why not?" asked Constance.

"True," said Mortimer, and his countenance somehow or another clouded.

Resuming, after a pause, Constance proceeded,—

"I don't understand you, Mortimer, this morning. Do you think it wrong to love the honours of a castle, even though one may love a dairy too?"

"Heaven forbid!" replied De Vere, with fervour, "especially in one so formed to grace it."

"Nay, that is not what I meant," said Constance; "but I own I should like our tastes to agree."

"They do," answered Mortimer, "I delight in the dairy-house, so do you."

"Ay! but I delight in the castle too, and so ought you."

"The castle is not mine," replied De Vere.

"But you would like it if it were!"

"I suppose I should."

"And give fêtes and balls, and do all that the lord of a castle should do? I am persuading papa to do this, and hope to succeed."

"Quite right," said Mortimer, thoughtfully.

"And you must stay and assist us," said Constance, "and contrive a pageant, as in the days of old we were talking of: but mind, not with that grave brow."

"Pageants are for courts," replied De Vere, "and I am afraid I am——"

"A bad courtier," interrupted Constance. "Papa himself says so, and, indeed, I thought you so myself, and was almost angry that you would not stay in town when I came to be presented, though you had never seen me before."

"And did you like the court, Constance?"

"Like it is a strong word," answered his cousin; "but I admired it: I thought it elegant and splendid."

"And you love elegance and splendor?"

"Why yes, in their proper places, such as the Drawing Room; and especially when I think of the gracious and graceful looks of her to whom I went to pay my duty."

"She adorns her high station," observed Mortimer, "as you, my fair cousin, will your's. I only wish you may be as happy as you are rich and fair, and as, I am sure you deserve to be."

So saying, he rather abruptly left her, not a little surprised, indeed puzzled, to make out many things he had said; and still more the particularity of manner with which he had said them.

Mortimer, however, went straight to the

dairy-house, and on the strength of the leave that had been given, sought out his cousin's garden-room, in which, what struck him most, was the appropriateness of its fitting. There was no costliness or splendor ; and though every thing was elegant as well as useful, the elegance was of the most unexpensive kind. It seemed as if its inhabitant had just left it. Books lay open upon the table, and a Spanish guitarre, with its broad ribbon rested, as if just laid down on a chair, on which a collection of Modinos, Notturnos, and Seguidillas, was carelessly thrown by its side. The window, which was casemented, and enriched with some old painted glass, was open, and let in a delicious song of birds: while both the eye and the ear were delighted by a reach of the brook, which ran playfully sparkling and foaming beneath.

De Vere took a chair which had been placed in the very properest point of view, but had to remove a volume of Sévigné's Letters, before he could sit down. It opened at one, which detailed Madame de Maintenon's reflections on the melancholy grandeur of the court. The occasion was the marriage of Mademoiselle d'Orleans with the King of Spain, and these

passages had been marked by the pencil of Constance.

"Tels sont les noirs chagrins qui voltigent autour du trône. Qui pourroit voir, sans être ému, les rages des ambitieux, les désespoirs des favorites, dans le tems que leurs places paroissent si miraculeuses; les tristes ennuies des dames de Versailles, dont peut-être la plus enviée n'est pas la plus exempte? Concluons que dans ce pays pour peu de grandeur qu'on ait, on en a toujours plus que de bonheur."

De Vere was struck deeply with the sentiment, and fell into a fit of musing, not merely on the sentiment itself, but on what Constance thought of it. That she had thought of it much, was clear, for she had noted the passage, with her own pretty hand, and in the same pretty hand appeared on the paper she had used as a marker in the book, the following little extract from another French writer.

"N'avez-vous pas souvent aux lieux infréquentés,
Rencontré tout à coup ces aspects enchantés
Qui suspendent vos pas, dont l'image chérie
Vous jette en une douce et longue rêverie?"

"What a charm is there in this," exclaimed De Vere, as he sallied into the little garden, and

let himself down an abrupt short path, to the side of the brook, the murmur of which never seemed so soothing.

"I never will part with these lines.—And yet what have I to do with them?" added he, safely lodging them in his pocket-book. "Notwithstanding these sentiments, she loves the court, of which she is so formed to be the ornament, while I am not born to be a courtier."

"And yet why not," continued he, quickening his pace, "and what forbids my rising there, as well as Eustace? Even Clayton haunts it, and begins to look high; yet he has no such incentive."

Now in this our friend was not quite so clear sighted, as we wish him always to be; but which, if we are true biographers, we shall be forced to shew, in the progress of this history, in some things he certainly was not.

Is it meant then, that Clayton could raise even his eyes, much more his hopes, to such a person as Lady Constance?

With any thing like expectation, any thing of plan, or intention, certainly not. But we have failed in our contemplations of human nature, and particularly failed in delineating Clayton's character, if we have not shewn that the strongest

contrasts, nay contradictions, may sometimes be found in the same bosom, and that very keen susceptibilities are not always incompatible with considerable laxity of principle. That Clayton had an eye for beauty, and could feel even the rapture of tenderness through all the avenues to the soul, is no more than true; although beauty, rapture, and tenderness itself, could all be abandoned in a moment, whenever the finger of self-interest beckoned him away. While this beckon was not perceived, and still more, if self-interest lay in the same road with feeling, of feeling no man had a prettier stock. In short, no man went beyond him in that sort of sentiment which emanates from the imagination, but has nothing to do with the heart.

That a person much less gifted in this way than himself, should not be able to see and converse daily with Constance, without *perceiving* some of that indefinable but sweet sensation which, if not love, is for the most part its precursor, cannot be surprising. That it should make him humbly attentive, vigilant, and observing, and even jealous of the looks and movements of the being that absorbed him, is also no more than natural. But it required all his high soaring ambition, in other words, all his assur-

ance, to make it credible that he could look at the Lady Constance, except as the lowest, the most creeping, distant, and hopeless of her admirers.

But he had this assurance, nor let us hate him for it. For where is the slave without hope? that friend of man, which softens, and even almost balances evil; which visits the dungeon, and keeps the chain of the prisoner from galling too heavily upon him? Will it then deny itself to love? Was the thing even impossible? Lord Mowbray, it is true, was of the highest birth —was rich and proud. But his pride was neither of his ancestors, nor his riches; but, strange to say, of that official consequence and parliamentary influence which were his darling, sole, and absorbing objects. A man of office was, therefore, to him at once a man of merit; and a skilful manager of a seat in parliament, equal in honour to the most profound statesman. Clayton was both, and had become more and more necessary to him, as will be hereafter shewn; moreover, he was advancing in favour with the ministers, and had obtained at the *levée*, which he never missed, the regular notice of royalty itself. As all this was done by smoothness alone; was he to despair of going farther?

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SARASWATI MAHAL

And if he did, was there any connection to which a rising politician might not aspire? If precedents were necessary, they were furnished daily by the marriages of commoners of high expectations, (though at present only ministers of ministers) with the daughters of the first nobility. These events always played round the fancy of the Parvenu: and let us not blame him for this, for there is such a happiness in love, that we can blame no man for loving, even (could he do so,) without hope: nor, if he cannot gather that delicious food on the surface, should we be averse to his seeking for it in the centre of the earth; or thinking it an easy leap to pluck it, like honour, from the pale-faced moon.

Hopeful, or hopeless, Clayton in secret dreamt sweet dreams of Lady Constance, as he saw in distance, sweet visions of power. Nor did he, like De Vere, balance on disparities; though unlike De Vere, he veiled, or endeavoured to veil, his visions both of power and love, under the *volto sciolto*, which nature had given them.

It was this *volto sciolto* which always impressed his friend, though, extraordinary as it may appear, it failed with his mistress. She observed that he never conversed with the eye,—which generally fell before those with whom

he talked; that when gayest, he never laughed the heart's laugh; and when gravest, he looked no one in the face.

How brilliant was the contrast shewn by Mortimer; who, whatever the subject, always sought her eye; that eye which he rejoiced to look into; in whose sunshine he loved to bask, and with which his own seemed never tired of communing.

But these were dangerous moments to De Vere, to whom we must now return. His scrutiny of his cousin went on, and without knowing it, he felt soothed or uneasy, as she seemed most to enjoy the bee-garden or the castle terrace. Formed alike to be the ornament of both, he admired her in the one, but loved her in the other. When to the neighbouring gentry, she did the honours of the castle, he was fascinated by the ease with which splendor seemed to sit upon her. But in the garden, among her flowers, or by the brook side, when she talked to him of the quiet and beauty of the scene, and added something of the gratitude due to heaven for its bounties, the castle and its honours seemed forgotten by both, and her words appeared to De Vere, to be "set off by some superior power." It was the voice of nature

herself, speaking in her sweetest and most silvery accents.

They were indeed silvery accents to the heart of De Vere; but he checked himself when he again looked at the towering battlements above, and recollected that she who had so charmed him in this little vale, was their high-born, noble, and distinguished heiress.

"It were all one," said De Vere to himself,

'That I should love a bright particular star,
And think to wed it, she is so above me.'

And yet I am of her blood," would he add, quickening his pace, though he knew not where it would lead him; "the honours, perhaps the riches of the world, are, it is said, open to me; and why should I suppose that path derogatory to honour, which so many honourable men pursue?"

Thus, strange to say, De Vere became much more in love, or rather less out of humour with public life, while in the very depth of a beautiful seclusion; and what the court and the senate had failed to effect, was almost brought to perfection in rustic retirement. Constance meantime, though romantic, was not so romantic as her cousin. She knew not the aspiring thoughts

that had begun anew to possess him; and as in common with her family, she wished him to pursue fortune in the world, she feared, when she observed his frequent visits to her garden, the still powerful influence of his earlier education.

"You are too fond of this little spot, my cousin," said she to him one day, "and I shall lock up the garden-room and its books, and send you to work with papa and Mr. Clayton. You shall read no more of Tasso till you have earned it better than by reading Shakspeare."

"And how should I earn it, my fair coz?"

"By helping papa on the state of the nation. You know he says you are to be a statesman; and my cousin must succeed, nay, shine, in whatever he undertake, or—"

"Or what, dear Constance?"

"He will not be my cousin,—I mean that he will not be himself," replied Constance.

"Too flattering girl," returned De Vere, "and too wild in me to listen. Have you so soon forgot the quaint old stanzas which but yesterday so pleased us both?

'I see how plentie surfeits oft,
And hastie clymbers soonest fall;
I see that such as sit aloft,
Mishap doth threaten most of all.

> The court, ne cart, I like ne loath,
> Extremes are counted worst of all,
> The golden mean betwixt them both,
> Doth surest sit, and fears no fall.' "*

"No, Mortimer," replied Constance, "I have not forgotten these lines any more than what I pointed out to you in the library, when you took down that old Sir Robert Naunton, and which you promised me to remember."

"The account of Lord Willoughby," said Mortimer.

"The same; and I told you," added Constance, smiling, "that I would make it haunt you like a ghost; so I have written it out, and mean to have it framed and glazed for you, that you may never forget your promise."

"I can never forget a promise to you, Constance," said Mortimer; "but, pray let me see the paper again."

"I will read it to you," replied Constance, and so saying she took from her porte feuille, the note she had made of the character of 'The Brave Lord Willoughby.'

"'Lord Willoughby was one of the queen's

* Antient Ballads. "My minde to me a kingdom is," and the "Golden Meane."

best swordsmen; he was a great master of the art military. I have heard it spoken, that had he not slighted the court, but applied himself to the queen, he might have enjoyed a plentiful portion of her grace. It was his saying, *and it did him no good*, that he was none of the *reptilia;* intimating that he could not creepe on the ground.' There," said Constance, playfully, "you see it did him no good."

"And you would have me one of these *reptilia?*" observed De Vere.

"I would have you in your place, my cousin," answered the lady.—"Where your birth and name require you, and where your duty to your country, not more than to yourself, makes it but right you should be."

"Duty to myself!"

"Yes! for when men of no figure pursue it, ought a De Vere to shrink from even claiming fortune?"

"My sweet coz, I fear you speak to a man who is out of suits with fortune; and as to claims, I believe those you are so good as to give me, are not quite such as would be acknowleged at Whitehall."

"Not if you resolve to think so," said Constance, "and fall, with Lord Willoughby, into

the vulgar mistake of calling every body there by the name of *reptilia*."

She gave him a lively smile as she said this, and De Vere was too much occupied with the beauty of that smile to answer; so she went on, but first changed to that impressive seriousness, which always gave authority as well as sweetness to her words.

"When your high-minded father went to court," said she, ("as I have heard my dear aunt say he often did, and was always well received,) he was thought any thing but belonging to the *reptilia*."

De Vere was always touched by every thing that related to his father, and fell instantly into the gravest reflection.

"Nay!" cried Constance, "I did not mean to make you melancholy by my sermon; I only wanted my, perhaps too proud, cousin, to assert himself, by not throwing away what his superiors—I mean," said she, (hesitating, and correcting herself), "what richer people are very glad to pick up."

"Dear Constance," said De Vere, "you are very good to be so interested about me. I am sure it will not be difficult to tempt me to court;

nay, the difficulty will be to keep me away, if you are there."

"And you will *condescend* then to be ambitious?"

"Certainly, if the object of it is fair."

"That's all I would have," said Constance; "and so now go and help papa with his papers."

CHAPTER XVIII.

PLOTTING.

> Thou wast not bound to answer
> An unknown opposite. Thou art not vanquish'd,
> But cozen'd and beguil'd.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

A VOLUME had been spoken in this little conversation, which De Vere pondered again and again. Never had his mind been so tost. He asked himself if he loved? but knew not how to answer; and would have asked if he hoped to be loved again? but knew still less. His heart, indeed, failed him, and he pursued not the inquiry. "At any rate," said he, "I will go to court, and get the better of my foolish disgusts." He even longed for the return of the family to town, that he might cultivate the minister, and apply himself to business, as a preliminary to which, he intimated to Clayton his wish, that his return to parliament might no longer be delayed.

Mr. Clayton received this intimation not quite as was expected. He seemed even a little disconcerted; while, not with his usual fluency, he expressed how cheerfully he was ready to resign. "Your uncle, however," added he, "may have something to say to you about it: you will, of course, consult him."

"Of course," said De Vere; and he sought for Lord Mowbray immediately.

Mr. Clayton, however, was more successful in finding him, as, indeed, he well might; for knowing him to be shut up in his library, he had directed De Vere to search for him in the park, while he went straight to his patron himself. In truth, things had passed, which made this determination of De Vere the reverse of convenient, either to Lord Mowbray or his confidant, for reasons which it may be now necessary to explain.

The interest which, at the beginning of the session, De Vere had taken in the debates, had not given his uncle, any more than the Parvenu, exactly the pleasure that might have been expected. Lord Mowbray had, in fact, early, and with concern, observed what he called the stiffness of character which his nephew displayed, and which certainly did not decrease as years

increased. He was always in alarm when he heard him talk, particularly to public men, of public measures. Of these, De Vere had his own opinions, and he was at no pains to conceal them. Lord Mowbray, too, had never forgotten that memorable prophecy of Harclai, uttered some years before, that whatever his connection with ministers might be, if he disapproved their measures, he would certainly oppose them. It had haunted him ever since. With these fears, he saw the approach of the time for his nephew's entry into parliament with no pleasure, and unburthening himself upon it to his confidant, asked his opinion.

That exemplary young man felt sorely divided, by so cruel a question, between duty to his patron, and feeling for his friend. But duty, as it ought, carried it, and he disclosed so many instances of indiscreet opinions on the part of De Vere, as perfectly petrified his uncle.

"It will ruin him," said Lord Mowbray, "nay, hurt my own interest as a part of the government. He lives, too, you say, as much with the opposition as the administration?"

"I am bound to own he does," said Clayton.

"Absurd and detestable," cried Lord Mowbray.

"Nay," observed Clayton, assuming cheerfulness, after a great deal of gloom; "you should allow for his warmth, his generous enthusiasm."

"Curse on enthusiasm!" exclaimed Lord Mowbray. "What has it to do with politics?"

"His principle, however," proceeded Clayton, "is merely this—Measures, not men."

"The most absurd principle that ever came into a man's head," answered the earl. "If the minister know this, he will be ruined past redemption. There is no saying how far this may hurt Mortimer, hurt his mother, nay, myself, and for the sake of our whole family interest, I wish I could even keep him out of parliament, at least till he knows better."

"But for one thing," observed Clayton, "I should agree with your lordship."

"What is that?"

"Obviously that I am the person to profit by it."

"Silly!" cried Lord Mowbray, "you are as foolish and romantic as himself."

Mr. Clayton then again assuming a melancholy

air, and hesitating almost to stammering, asked Lord Mowbray if he was serious in his wish; and upon being assured that he was so, after many excuses for having locked up a secret of such importance in his own breast, he informed his patron, that, even if he did not entertain this wish, he feared it was by no means clear that Mr. De Vere could command his election, should he, Clayton, be called upon to vacate.

The astonished earl, in unspeakable alarm, demanded explanation, and with a mixed feeling of horror and consolation, heard that a spirit of opposition to the De Veres, as patrons of the borough, had long been secretly fostered among the voters, though they would gladly attend to the nomination of Lord Mowbray. "So that in fact," continued the secretary, "it is but changing one part of the family for another, though the appearance it would have, would, I own, be dreadful; and this was one reason why I have been so loath to mention it to your lordship."

Recovered a little from his terror, Clayton was glad to discover more of surprise than anger in his patron, on this communication: for we are here bound to own the truth, that something like this very change had glanced through Lord

Mowbray's brain, when he first visited his sister and nephew at Talbois, as related in a former chapter.

"And why will they not hear of a De Vere?" asked Lord Mowbray.

"They say that the late General," answered Clayton, "from being always in opposition, deprived them of their fair expectations from government; that the present Mr. De Vere had never once been near them, leaving it all to me to represent them with your lordship, and even if elected, they were not sure that he would not tread in his father's steps. In short, they declare—but I really feel afraid to say what they declare, and my friendship for Mr. De Vere is hurt to the quick at it."

"My good Clayton," answered Lord Mowbray, "you are bound, even for his sake, to disclose it."

"True," said Clayton. "They declare, then, they will not return Mr. De Vere at all; but would be happy to preserve me as their representative in parliament, and their representative with your lordship as to all the wants of the borough; and when I firmly protested against this as dishonourable to Mr. De Vere, as a thing you would never consent to—"

"Were you right in going quite so far?" said Lord Mowbray.

"They declared if you would not accept them, they would throw themselves into the hands of Lord Cleveland, who, your lordship knows, has some property himself in the borough, and has long paid a sort of court to Mr. De Vere, whether for his sake personally, or to manage the borough for him, I never could make out."

"This is a serious dilemma," said Lord Mowbray, "and greatly alters the case. For you see, if we refuse, it will not be to benefit my nephew, and he himself would not be for abandoning the family interest. But, at all events, even with my nomination, you say they refuse *him*."

"Positively!"

"Yet he is the sole freeholder of the borough, and they only hold their burgages from him."

"That was my hope," answered Clayton, "and I represented it to them. But in truth, my dear lord, they are bad, very bad men."

"Why they surely would not keep their freeholds, spite of those who made them."

"Too true," answered Clayton.

"And you have not mentioned this to Mortimer?"

"Scarcely; when, till now, I have not opened it to your lordship's self. But, in truth, if you will forgive my zealous plainness, I feared his imprudence; for I have no doubt he would have left them for ever, in a fit of disgust, (if not, from his sense of propriety), and even have refused to take legal measures to make them surrender. Indeed they would have been fruitless, for I am told they are all freeholders in law."

"They certainly are, and I am really embarrassed," observed the earl, yet smoothing his front. "We cannot be too cautious; we must break the thing by degrees to my nephew. Could his return be postponed till a general election something might yet be done; but he expects, and is earnest, no doubt, to come in immediately."

"I have a thought," said Clayton, "but it is a mere thought—"

"My dear Clayton, what is it?"

"That he is not so bent upon it as he was at first; nay, that office itself *at home*, has not such charms for him."

He then explained to the more and more sur-

prised Lord Mowbray, that from his often expressed admiration of Sir William Temple, both as a public and private man, and something very like an opinion that his was the model on which he would wish to form himself, he thought De Vere might be easily induced to adopt the honourable career of diplomacy, though it might exile him for some time abroad, rather than pursue the up-hill, and, to him, difficult path at home.

A flash of light seemed to come across Lord Mowbray, and he exclaimed, "An excellent thought, my dear Clayton, an excellent thought!" And immediately the whole management and transfer of the borough, through Clayton's assistance, from the De Vere to the Mowbray branch of the family, laid a clinching hold of his lordship's imagination.

From all this, the reader will perhaps be not surprised, that De Vere's new determination was not very pleasant to his uncle, any more than to the secretary.

Lord Mowbray, however, was put to still greater inconvenience, when his nephew, in addition to his wish respecting the seat, inquired rather eagerly whether his uncle had been so kind as to mention him to the Premier, and with what results. We may judge De Vere's sur-

prise, when he was told, that, except in talking of him to the minister as a person likely to support him, when he should come into parliament, he had not opened the subject. In excuse he said the matter was too delicate to be hurried; that the Premier, though enlightened, was distant and haughty, and that even his nearest colleagues were sometimes afraid of asking things of him.

It is certain Lord Mowbray was afraid of him at any time; for with all his high notions of himself, he knew that but for his members, he would not be tolerated for a moment. He therefore shrank before the inquiry of De Vere, in a manner almost to move his pity, and certainly to silence him.

"I wish," said Lord Mowbray, "you would let your friend Clayton talk over the whole subject with you."

De Vere assented, and much to his annoyance, this faithful friend had the agreeable duty cast upon him, of fitting the snare he had himself woven for his unsuspecting victim.

In regard to the seat, as it luckily was during a prorogation, no election could then take place; and could the diplomatic project be brought to bear, as it probably then would not be such an

object to De Vere, Mr. Clayton very wisely resolved not to mention the mutiny in the borough, but to direct the whole force of his genius to turn his friend's views to a foreign mission.

In this, he in part succeeded, and might have done so entirely, but for one obstacle. In the *then* state of his heart, De Vere could not bear the thought of a separation from Constance.

This obstacle was suspected, if not penetrated by the Parvenu; who, however it appalled him on one account, was not without consolation for it on another; as in the changes and chances of affairs he hoped that such a secret might be turned to profit. Was old Harclai so wrong, then, in calling a spider's web an epitome of the world? If all were like the Parvenu, certainly not; but, thank God, that is not so.

The conference between the two friends ended in De Vere's promising at least to think of diplomacy, to which he was not really averse; and as for the election, to the great joy both of the secretary and his patron, it was postponed as premature.

That day at dinner nothing could exceed the good humour of the earl, who, after several allusions, when the servants had withdrawn,

filled a glass to his Excellency's health. De Vere smiled, and Constance looked surprised, and more than surprised, when she heard of the embryo plans that had closed the morning.

"We had not settled this in the bee garden," said Constance to herself, and became thoughtful for the rest of the night.

The next day there was a riding party in the park. Lord Mowbray, as usual, engrossed his secretary, and trotted on. De Vere and his cousin, not as usual, loitered behind. Yet De Vere sought in vain to draw her out. She was still thoughtful and occupied. At length, after a pause, "Tell me," she said, "cousin Mortimer, if I may ask, how this thing has come about? Was diplomacy your own proposal, or did you adopt it from another?"

"I scarcely know," answered Mortimer, "it arose out of general talk. I believe Clayton mentioned, and I listened to it."

"Listened! then it is not so settled a thing?"

"O, no! I found that it lay more within my uncle's compass; and, to tell the truth, my fair coz, I thought it would place me more out of reach of the *reptilia*, so I encouraged, or rather did not discourage it."

"I hate *reptilia* as much as you," replied

Constance; "but I do not, as you do, believe all public persons to be *reptilia.* I can think high people very high characters; and—"

"And what?" cried Mortimer, observing her to pause.

"And low people very low characters. So now tell me about the seat, and Mr. Clayton."

"A strange association," cried De Vere.

"Perhaps so; but tell me, does Mr. Clayton immediately vacate?"

"He cannot," returned De Vere; "or, at least, I could not be elected till the meeting of parliament, which is far off."

"Meantime, you may be sent to a foreign court," said Constance.

"I may, if I pursue the plan, and sacrifice the dairy-house to ambition, which, I suppose," (giving a sigh,) "I must do."

Constance was almost disconcerted, but pursuing her inquiry, asked whether, though he went abroad, he still meant to come into parliament?

"Every thing is so unsettled," replied he, "that I know not my fate; but there seems something in the argument, that at least while abroad, it would be almost unfair to the government to deprive them of the seat."

"And this argument was used by—"

"Clayton," continued Mortimer, "who certainly seems to reason very sensibly about it."

"I am satisfied, my cousin," said Constance, "let us gallop."

CHAPTER XIX.

UNCERTAINTIES.

Lovers cannot see
The pretty follies that themselves commit.

SHAKSPEARE.

LADY ELEANOR now joined the party at Castle Mowbray, much to the pleasure of her son and of Constance, who most entirely loved her; and yet for several days there was much pensiveness on the part of Constance, and more than pensiveness on that of De Vere. He even seemed almost to avoid his cousin, and was evidently absorbed in mental abstraction. Clayton took advantage of his frequent absence, and put all his insinuating powers in requisition, to please he daughter of his patron.

To his mortification, he did not succeed, nor could he understand any more than feel gratified with a look and manner which seemed to search him through. In particular, he most

extremely disliked, and tasked his skill in vain to detach her from the only subject on which she seemed willing to converse with him, namely, the management of the De Vere interest in the borough. About this, she not only displayed a very disagreeable curiosity, but a very inconvenient portion of information, as it related to the fidelity or wavering of particular voters; and frequently annoyed her humble admirer by asking his opinion whether somebody was not machinating against his single-hearted friend: and whether he would not and ought not to advise him to pass some time on the spot, in order to guard against treachery? Clayton assured her it was not necessary, but was on thorns to discover the sources of her evident information, in which, however, he was altogether unsuccessful.

Lady Eleanor, meantime, was too much occupied in observing her son, to interfere in the borough politics; which, indeed, were not her forte. At first she thought De Vere so busy with his new object of diplomacy, as to account for the abstraction which had increased upon him. But her penetration, as well as her interest about him, were too keen to be satisfied; and when she viewed the beauty of her niece, and

felt the charm of her mind, from her own admiration, and the knowledge she had of her son, she had little doubt how it was with him. It caused her the most lively uneasiness. "A De Vere and a Mowbray conjoined," said she, "might pretend to any Mowbray alone,—but Talbois and the castle can never be allied." Much, however, as she observed her son, she was little desirous of opening the subject to him. "Poor fellow!" said she, "I see the contest of his mind: but it is a mind I will not affront, by presuming to interfere; for Mortimer is the soul of honour." She naturally, too, observed the demeanour of her niece, and found her also busied; but it was chiefly (and she thought it strange) with the scrutiny of Clayton.

As to De Vere, what was chiefly remarkable, was, that he no longer visited the apiary. For this, the season was an excuse, if he had had no other—though never did sportsman so abuse his opportunities. Reflection and soliloquy seemed the game for him, of which the other game successfully profited, by generally escaping him.

"Were she portionless and untitled," said he to himself one day, in the September stubbles,

which he affected to beat; "were she even the daughter of the peasant that follows me, and does my bidding, I might give way. As it is, I admire you, my fair cousin; but as for love, I am in armour of proof." So saying, he looked around him, and snuffed the air with a momentary elevation of defiance, which, considering what was going forward, perfectly astonished the gamekeeper in attendance. For all the dogs were at that moment in the midst of a point, so that the very silence gave "dreadful note of preparation." But nothing of this was even seen by De Vere, who was lost in other thoughts; and at that instant a covey of birds flew up so close to his foot, and he fired as he thought so exactly into the midst of them, covering at least half a dozen, that he expected to see them almost all fall.

"Ye fired too low by a yard, and too soon by half a minute," cried the gamekeeper.

"Impossible!" said the amazed De Vere.

"But ye did, though," continued the gamekeeper (who had taught him when a boy at Talbois), "and I never seed ye shoot so bad."

"I cannot shoot to-day, Robin," said De Vere, "I will go home."

"And yet ye promised my young lady a brace of plump ones," answered, Robin, "when she patted Juno, and came out to see us off."

"True, Robin," said De Vere; "but I have now missed three times,—this is not a shooting day with me."

"It used not to be so at Talbois—God bless the old place!—when you walked as fast as the dogs, and shot as well as me," said Robin. "But come, faint-heart never won," (De Vere rather smiled,) "we'll do better next time."

"Not to-day," said De Vere, throwing the butt end of his piece over his shoulder, and leaving friend Robin to follow the sport. "I would much rather hunt my own thoughts here," continued he, when alone, and plunging into a recess near the castle, called the wilderness. "I would much rather—

'Welcome folded arms and fixed eyes,
A sigh that, piercing, mortifies,
A look that's fastened to the ground,
A tongue chained up without a sound.'"

But here he was disappointed; for he had not been seated on the bench he sought five minutes, before voices and footsteps shewed that

company was near, and this company consisted of his mother, Lady Constance, and Clayton.

"So soon returned!" said Lady Eleanor.

"Rather so late," answered De Vere, "for I shot so ill, I wonder I did not give it up sooner."

"And have you so little perseverance?"

"I cannot persevere when I know it is bootless," replied De Vere.

"And yet you do not in general take 'bootless' so easily for granted," said his mother.

"You did not do so at Talbois," added Constance, in a tone of raillery. "But that was when you were in the full enjoyment of youth and liberty; now you are old and tired, and have a right to repose. You have at least brought me my birds?"

"Not even that, my fair cousin. In truth there seemed a spell over me to-day, and what I could not accomplish, I thought it best to fly."

There seemed to be a meaning in the tone with which he said this, and Constance answered:

"Very philosophical, indeed; I wish you joy of your *nonchalance*," and then fell to playing unconsciously with her glove.

"*Nonchalance!*" cried De Vere, with some emotion.

"Yes, and Mr. Clayton admires you for it; so if you have any to spare, bestow it upon him. He says he is uneasy from too much feeling."

"I am in the clouds," said Mortimer.

"And I," cried Clayton, breaking silence.

"Mr. Clayton," said Lady Eleanor, "has been quite enthusiastic just now, in lamenting the inconveniences of enthusiasm. He says it often leads him to hope impossibilities, and cling to his hope, though sure to be disappointed."

"A happy creed," said Mortimer, "and I could envy him——"

"Envy him!" cried Constance, with quickness.

"My son should envy no one," observed Lady Eleanor.

"Strange if he did," exclaimed Clayton, "when all the world is before him where to choose. Stranger still, to envy one like me."

Here, Mr. Clayton chose to look down and sigh; and Constance looked up, with an air of displeasure, not usual with her.

"Come," said Lady Eleanor, "you are all too young to be philosophers; and I do not know what has come over either you, Mortimer,

or your friend, Mr. Clayton. You are certainly not such good company as you used to be in the country. But politics have spoiled you both; and we shall certainly banish you into the world again; for you seem tired of us, and all the other insipidities of retreat."

De Vere laughed, and Clayton was about to reply, and had planned some very pretty compliments upon it, when a servant coming with a summons for him from Lord Mowbray, deprived the party of their compliments, and the complimenter into the bargain.

"Say what you will, Mortimer," said Constance, when he was gone, "I do not like your friend: nor do I know what it is in him that has so fascinated you and my father."

"We think him an honest and grateful fellow," replied Mortimer, "greatly attached to me, and through me, to my uncle."

"Have a care," returned Constance, smiling, "that you do not find it is only for your uncle's sake that you yourself are liked: or at any rate that he is a little of the cat kind, attached to the house rather than the master."

Lady Eleanor looked surprised, and would have spoken, had not her son interrupted her.

"I am always afraid of you, Constance," said

he, "when you are in your severities, for I fear my turn will come next."

"You afraid of me, Mortimer?"

"Yes, for are you not the most fastidious princess upon earth; and do you not require a perfection in your subjects to which no mortal can attain? It was but the other day, that you did not like Lord Cleveland."

"And do *you* like Lord Cleveland?"

"We are not much alike, I believe," replied Mortimer.

"Ah! how unlike, as well as to this Clayton," rejoined Lady Constance.

Mortimer felt pleased; but, resolving to try his cousin a little more, he went on. "Do you know what Lord Cleveland has said of you since you were so distant to him, as I heard you were, in town?"

"It concerns me little," observed Constance, coldly.

"Nevertheless, you shall hear," replied De Vere, "for it was thought witty."

"And, no doubt, impertinent," rejoined Constance.

"On the contrary, complimentary; for he said you were like the beautiful marble of your

own beautiful bust, as smooth and as polished, but as hard and as cold."

Lady Eleanor gave Mortimer a penetrating look at this speech, in which there was as much uneasiness as inquiry.

"Lord Cleveland is welcome to his opinion," said Lady Constance, with composure, "provided all the world do not agree with him."

"I fear poor Clayton will, if you abuse him as you did just now."

"I will be obliged to you, Mortimer," returned the lady, "not to name Mr. Clayton again with such associates, even in jest."

"Nor Lord Cleveland?"

"Neither of them," answered Constance. "What I observe in the first is too little to my taste, and the character of the latter too much to my *dis*taste, to feel myself honoured by their names."

"You are grave, dear Constance."

"And you teazing, Mortimer."

"What shall I talk of to please you?"

"Tell me more of the moated house," replied Constance.

Lady Eleanor watched this conversation with interest, for she knew that the moated house

was a subject always pleasing to her niece, who had listened again and again to the account of the swelling of Mortimer's heart under the tyranny of his brother—of his efforts to set himself free—his self-education and irregular studies—and the pleasure, after all, which the liberty of his sylvan life gave him in roaming where he pleased, but particularly through the forest of Needwood.

"I must see more of that forest," said Lady Constance.

"I believe I am acquainted with every tree in it," replied Mortimer, "and shall be glad to introduce you."

"My father shall build a cottage near to Talbois," said Constance, "but deeper in the woods; and could I find a Celia, I would be a Rosalind."

"Would that be necessary," said Mortimer, with hesitating curiosity, "when Talbois is at hand? I mean when my mother would be so glad to receive you."

His mother listened to this, with the deepest attention, still not unmixed with anxiety, and she searched in the eyes both of Mortimer and Constance for the truth of their position together.

Spite of her uneasiness, however, she could not but feel pleased at an embrace by Constance, accompanied by an exclamation, "Talbois is a dear place, and my aunt a dear woman; I must always think it interesting, if only for having had such an Orson chained there. But I love it for its own sake, its retirement, and quaintness; I could even sometimes, (but mind only sometimes,) love it better than all these piles of grandeur about us."

"*You* love retirement and quaintness—*you* prefer the humble Talbois?" cried Mortimer.

"Shock not the spirits of the De Veres," cried Constance, laughing. "Shock not departed princes, by talking of humility."

"And yet have I not that to make me humble?" replied Mortimer.

"I know it not," said Constance, with surprise.

"Nor I," echoed Lady Eleanor, "not even the scantiness of your fortune ought to make you humble, when we recollect," (and she here looked somewhat loftily) "by what, and by whom it was occasioned."

Constance here again took the hand of her aunt, of whose elevation she seemed even to partake, though arising from that which had

reduced her worldly circumstances to absolute mediocrity.

"Yes, yes, I am humble enough," resumed Mortimer, "though I have also that," added he, in a higher tone, "might give one pride;" and he fixed his eyes upon Constance with an ardour, and almost a freedom he had never used before.

"And what is that, cousin Mortimer?" asked Constance, almost disconcerted.

"A mind," answered he, "to distinguish and adore merit, and a heart to feel beauty; yet a firmness to brave all, if it be right, and duty to the possessor of them require it."

Lady Eleanor let fall some tears, spite of her self-command; and with all her self-possession, the cheek of Constance was rosied over with blushes at this speech, which seemed to frighten Mortimer himself. He felt it, and to divert its effects he again rallied his cousin upon what he called her affected love of moderation, and the preference she had asserted, even *though only sometimes* of such a forest-seat as Talbois, to the pride and glories of the commanding castle.

"And why should I not prefer it?" asked Constance, trying to recover herself.

"Simply because you are the acknowledged queen of the Opera and Grosvenor-square, and can have nothing to do with Rosalinds and Celias, and the native burghers of the forest. Beauty, you know,—

> 'Is nature's brag, and should be shewn
> In courts, and feasts, and high solemnities,
> Where most may wonder at the workmanship.'

So thinks Lord Cleveland, and therefore he seeks you, my fair cousin."

"Seeks her!" "Seeks me!" cried Lady Eleanor and her niece, both in a breath.

De Vere then asked them if it was possible, Lord Mowbray had not communicated to them Lord Cleveland's answer to a letter, which, by his uncle's desire, he, De Vere, had written to him two days before?

"You write to Lord Cleveland about me' Mortimer, and by my father's desire, and not inform me of it!" and she looked much disconcerted.

"Nay, sweet coz," said De Vere, "do not punish me with such a look. It was but a simple invitation to the castle, of which, as its lady, I concluded its lord had apprised you."

"But how came the invitation?" asked Constance, "and to such a man? Believe me it gives me no pleasure."

"*Such* a man!" exclaimed De Vere: "Is it thus you talk of your own near kinsman, the monarch of fashion, and as I have been told by Clayton———"

"Mr. Clayton again!"

"Yes, Clayton: who declares that during the single month of your reign after you were presented last spring, no one ever made so many conquests, and no conquest so illustrious as that of Lord Cleveland."

Serious or jesting, Constance seemed far from being pleased with this tone of her cousin, and Lady Eleanor herself begged him to put an end to it, by saying how things really were. Mortimer complied, and it seemed, that Lord Mowbray had really employed his nephew to send the invitation we have mentioned.

But I fear much ground must be gone over ere we can set this matter before the reader in all the perspicuity we wish. For Lord Cleveland had encouraged a sort of intimacy with De Vere, (or rather he had given him an opening to one if he pleased) even from the days of his emerging from the confine-

ment of the moated house. His lordship thought he might make what he called a pretty fellow, and from his connection with him, was, at one time, even willing to produce him in the world; an advantage of which few but knew the benefit, and which all aspiring young men envied, but of which, some how or another, De Vere did not profit, as it was said he ought to have done.

Lord Cleveland, however, as much the senior in age, had sometimes favoured him with instructions both in politics and supreme *bon ton;* of which last, as De Vere had said, he was the undisputed sovereign. He had even now and then written to him with easy friendliness. Probably, he might have had other motives for this than appeared in the letters themselves. But be that as it will, both the friendship and the correspondence languished, and was only occasionally revived.

Lord Cleveland, however, is much too important and too decided a personage to be introduced to the reader at the end of a chapter; or, indeed, any where but in a chapter of his own. We therefore close the present one to open in another, perhaps the most illustrious character of our whole biography.

CHAPTER XX.

A MAGNIFICO OF THE FIRST CLASS.

> The Duke is marvellous little beholden to your report.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

> Sir, I commend you to your own content.
> He that commends me to my own content,
> Commends me to a thing I cannot get.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

THE Earl of Cleveland was a cousin, only some once or twice removed from the Earl of Mowbray, who, through his mother, derived a very considerable proportion of his estates from the Cleveland family. Sprung from one of the most powerful and ancient lineages of the kingdom, he ranked, if not first, yet among the very first of the nobility; and to this he added a fortune, which indulgent as he was to a very magnificent taste, he knew well how to preserve. It was observed, indeed, that however great his expences, they were all of a personal nature,

instruments of his power, or of his pleasures; and that no great public institution, or national establishment, and still less that private charities, had ever benefited by his vast wealth. He was endowed with great and comprehensive talents: had a shrewdness and reach of understanding which few could equal, and which was well turned to account, both on the turf and at the card-table, as well as in the closet, not merely of the minister, but of the highest personage of the realm. This, and a very active propensity to party politics, had made him, though not at present in the administration, all-powerful with the minister.

It was said, indeed, that he rode the administration (as he certainly did their subalterns) with a hard and heavy curb, which he seldom relaxed, till he carried whatever object he had before him. In doing this, he had not unfrequently changed his line of action, and was court to-day or country to-morrow, with a most fearless contempt of the animadversions to which such conduct exposed him. Nor did this proceed from meanness, so much as from the absolute loftiness of his spirit, which laughed at the fear of offending any one, since to every one he thought himself superior.

It was whispered that his advances towards De Vere were occasioned by his knowledge of the family interest that was to return him to parliament; being very intent, and losing no opportunity where he could make one, of enlisting young men among his followers. And in this, though of a proud and repulsive spirit, neither birth, nor figure, nor high sense of integrity, such as De Vere's, were the chief considerations that swayed him; his object being political influence, no matter through whom.

Thus ambition might be said to have been his greatest passion, had it not held a divided empire with another, which governed him quite as strongly, and, indeed, absorbed more of his time: we mean a devotion to the fair.

It is inconceivable with what eagerness he pursued this; into how many engagements it plunged him; how many emissaries it forced him to employ, and what expences—but no! we should wrong his prudence if we did not confess that eager as he was to gratify his wishes in this respect, he never suffered them to surprise him into any thing like what he called a profligate profusion.

And yet, to speak of the person of the magnifico, an eye observer would look in vain for

the graces of Antinous, or the features of Apollo. His features, indeed, were, from nature, unexpressive, and his person far from attractive; so that when we consider this part of his history, and how successful he was in enslaving the admiration of the sex, we are tempted to exclaim with one, who was as observing of nature, as poetical in description:—

> "Unseemly man to please fair lady's eye,—
> Yet he of ladies oft was loved full dear,
> When fairer faces were bid standen bye,
> Oh! who does know the bent of woman's phantasy?"*

To do Lord Cleveland justice, however, we are bound to own, that what nature had refused, education and habit had supplied. The loftiness of his mind, ill-directed as it was, had communicated itself to his manner; and this, aided by the air of the court in which he had been bred, had given him an imposing look, and, when he pleased, a dignity of demeanour which seldom went unremarked; so that, on seeing him, you could not help admitting there was the air of a man of quality about him. In short, all fashion bowed to him, and had chosen

* Fairy Queen.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SARASWATI MAHAL

him for her monarch, and we know what that will effect in a woman's heart. But he had also another property which always makes its way with the sex; that of great personal bravery, when, as had been the fact, either the passion we are upon, or the disdain with which he often treated others, had exposed him to be called to the field. My Lord Herbert (himself a great knight) tells you of a Monsieur de Balagny who was the ugliest man in France. But he was also the bravest, and Monsieur de Balagny was accordingly the greatest favourite of the ladies.

Lord Cleveland was, as we have said, magnificent, and he made magnificence subservient to the two great passions we have commemorated. His entertainments, both at home and abroad, filled the court with the praises of his grandeur, and of the elegance of his taste; and to obtain a place at his suppers or his concerts was an object of struggle, even among the most fashionable. But while gazers (particularly female gazers) admired, the close observer came to this conclusion, that in this man of power, of fashion, high breeding, and magnificence, all was self. Never had he been known to perform one great action, to give one tear to sympathy, or one guinea to distress.

Yet let us not wrong him in this respect. He was not entirely hardened, and has at least been known to deplore his own lot. For he had reached to four-and-thirty years without a self-approving hour. In truth, he felt that his talents were thrown away, his time murdered, his opportunities lost, without a chance of obtaining that distinction which he really desired, and which men may fairly plume themselves upon, who have deserved well of their country,

"And read their history in a nation's eyes."

"*Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor,*" might, therefore, be said to be his motto. It is certain he had that in him which seemed as if he had been originally designed for better things; and has been known to sigh over past hours, and to "grieve that he prized them no more." Yet all his grief was vain; for such is the force of habit, that we fruitlessly seek to escape from its tyranny, and though we feel our bonds, often plunge deeper in unworthiness, to obtain a little temporary relief.

Thus satiated, restless, and dissatisfied, like the habitual drunkard, he was forced to look to new excitements for comfort, till excitement itself had lost its power; and in these moments it

was that he first beheld the fresh, the pure, and innocent Constance.

Strange to say, he could not approach her as he did other females; for, practised as he was, there was something about her which awed him into respect; nor did he find himself disposed to join in that levity and sarcasm in regard to all that was serious, which he had often found so agreeable to ill regulated young women. For this he was sneered at by several female Clevelands, who had uselessly glittered their hour, too, on the stage of life.

He laughed at himself for it, and as he made no way, soon fell back upon that which was not only more natural to him, but which had hitherto been more successful in engaging such females as he wished to please.

But the delicate Constance was shocked with his profaneness, instead of being won by his wit. What is more, she was undazzled by his fashion, and the almost resistless reputation he enjoyed with her sex. Though at so early an age, so genuine was her own sense of propriety, so just her estimation of the realities of things, that there was nothing in him which she could willingly admire; while the levity of his tone filled her with disgust.

He once came to her box at the Opera, with his usual imposing air, to pay her, as he said, his homages. She had seen him the moment before paying the same homages in the box of a celebrated dancer, and she turned from him with coldness. Her father chid her for it, and when she told him the reason, contented himself with saying, "We must take men of quality as we find them."

The pure and sensible Constance did not enter into this; and Lord Cleveland, repulsed for the first time in his life, complained to one of his female allies, that he had been disconcerted by a chit.

But this only piqued him into greater exertions. He was invited by Lord Mowbray, nay, as a relation, sometimes invited himself to his house, where the honours were done by the young Constance, in a manner only to attract him the more. He changed his battery again, and put on all his dignity, the better to suit himself to her's. He lavished all his powers of entertainment; exerted great natural sense; and told domestic anecdotes of the highest personage of the kingdom, till he dazzled poor Lord Mowbray to the last degree of respectful admiration.

With Constance, he was careful to let no levity or sarcasm escape, and even descanted on marriage as the only real happiness in life.

Such an advance from such a man was thought irresistible; for though no longer a young man, his figure and reputation commanded much felicity in his pursuits. He recollected Richelieu, for whom, at his years, two ladies had actually fought a duel; and if he was in earnest in the hope of obtaining Constance as a wife, the disparity of their ages never struck him.

Let all this be as it will, this favourite of fortune was foiled in his design. The winter, that is, the London winter, rolled on; Lady Constance was immovable, and went out of town, pronounced by Lord Cleveland, and many of her own private acquaintance, a cold and heartless creature, a beautiful pageant, " a breathing rather than a life."

To console himself, the magnifico told his own heart that she was nothing but a little prude, and endeavoured to laugh at his own condescension in having seriously thought of her. He gave several fine dinners, yawned over the remnants of the Opera: yawned again at Vauxhall and Richmond, and in short, gathered

all the flowers that a London summer could afford by way of a diversion. But he more than ever sighed over the dissipation that had corrupted his youth, and rendered his manhood unrespectable; and sighed still more to think he was past cure. Cradled in self-indulgence, which had made him a total stranger to the sentiment, still more to the love of virtue, he had no resting-place for his mind, which thus in the vigour of his life was fast wearing out; and his sense and reflection seemed only given him to make him more alive to his misery. Like Macbeth, in blood he was—

> "Step't in so far, that should he wade no more,
> Returning were as tedious as go o'er."

The magnifico, therefore, had nothing left for it but to drown reflection as well as he could. His phaeton was seen more than ever in Piccadilly, and at White's; and while he himself confessed the truth of the maxim of another courtier, "*sedit post equitem cura*," everybody that did not know him, and some who did, thought him an enviable man.

From this blunted state he was scarcely roused by the letter from De Vere. To De Vere, as has been stated, he had shewn some

attentions. He found, however, in his rustic novice, as he at first called him, what gave him, he said, a cursed deal of trouble. He had a will of his own, and would give no pledge for his politics. He was indifferent, too, to cards and dice; had a peculiar taste as to female attractions; even talked of female character, and cared not to associate with dancers and buffoons. The magnifico could not make him out. De Vere had even but lately dared to quote to him (for he was fond of the old poets,) that philosphical strain formerly so celebrated,

"My mind to me a kingdom is."

The few letters, therefore, which the magnifico had lately given him, were confined to buizzing his tastes, and the primitiveness which he said would infallibly make him the laughing stock of the world.

De Vere cared little for the prophecy, and the correspondence, as we have related, languished till it died a natural death. The magnifico therefore was only the more surprised, and felt almost excited, knowing whence it came, to receive a letter and invitation from him. Lord Cleveland instantly answered it, in

a letter which, to shew the style of writing of this Petronius, as well as the turn of mind which he had created for himself, we think it right to subjoin:—

"However you may write, or Milton sing, I see no delight in leaves or fuming rills. I care nothing for meadow green, or mountain grey, (indeed I hate to climb mountains); as little for kine, or dairy, or even dairy-maids; whatever you may think. All, even the last, are but inanimate nature, and I hate every thing inanimate. If I must have a green, let it be the green of a card table, or at most Richmond-green. In short, take me not from London, and London interests. Your fauns and dryads shew nothing like them, and I allow you to live with them on sour apples, or even acorns, if you please, but, observe, without me. No! give *me* the luxury you despise; but allow me to say that you are no philosopher, at least no political philosopher, for so doing. For is not luxury the great mean of circulating wealth, and supporting the state? You see I have not read Hume, or conversed with Oswald for nothing. In short, let me have Bond-street, and excitement even in August, and I will leave you to groves, Amaryllis, and ennui.

"You tell me, in the language of the old song,

'Your mind to you a kingdom is;'

and a very pretty kingdom I allow it to be. But there are better in the world; and I am inclined to prefer good, sensible, town-loving Ben, who knew, or at least enjoyed, life better than your quizzical old bard.

'I am no such piled cynic to believe,
That beggary is earthly happiness,
Or with a number of your patient fools,
To sing 'My minde to me a kingdom is,'
When the lank hungrie stomach barks for food.'*

"If this is your kingdom, I wish your spare majesty joy of it; I will be content to be a fat subject.

"There is but one part of the temptations at the castle, though you do not actually hold it out, which could influence me to come—*your* and *my* beautiful cousin. If she is there, I kiss her ladyship's hands with profound devotion. She might make even a desert and acorns agreeable, provided she be quite as elegant, and a little less refined in the country, than in town.

* See, Every Man out of his Humour, A. 1. S. 1.

But I fear that the love of sentiment into which she was too fast falling, and which made her stay away two nights running from the Opera, will have gained head on the banks of the Dove, with you for a companion. I see, therefore, I should have no chance. But if she will but hold up a finger for me, and I interfere not with Clayton's hopes, or yours, I will lay myself at her feet in four-and-twenty hours.

"There! I think I have answered your letter in all its points: so I will only add my humble duty to the most potent, grave, and reverend signor, your uncle, and subscribe myself, my dear *ruris amator*, Mortimer,

"*Urbis Amator*,

"CLEVELAND."

This gay answer to Lord Mowbray's invitation, De Vere had communicated to his uncle, previous to his going to shoot on the morning we are commemorating; and it was only in the last stage of the conversation we have recorded, that the ladies of the castle were apprised of it. Lord Mowbray in fact now appeared with the letter in his hand; and having only, as he said, skimmed it, and the ladies had not seen it, condescendingly said, Mortimer should read it to them.

"And what do you think of it?" said Mortimer, when he had finished.

"It is, at least, a lively letter," observed Lord Mowbray; "and but for the light manner in which he thinks it not unbecoming to mention me, which I do not altogether like, I could laugh with his lordship at your woods and fields. But to mention a minister with the least mockery, is, at least, unseemly, and beneath a person of his birth and breeding."

"But what does my fair cousin think?" asked Mortimer, "and what shall I say to him of the finger to be held up?"

"I have little right to think about it," replied Lady Constance. "The letter is, to me, full of affected sprightliness, which I do not relish, coming from the quarter it does. It will not make me like Lord Cleveland better than I did; there are things in it, too, which I look upon as impertinent."

"You surely take it too gravely," observed Mortimer, "and should allow for *badinage*."

"As much as you please," replied Constance, "where the person, from situation, has a privilege to rally one."

"Are you not too serious?" said Mortimer.

"I hope not, though I know how much it is

the very summit of fashion to admire this high person for his agreeable freedoms. To me, there is a distinction between freedom and forwardness, which, if I had not marked it in others, his lordship would never fail to make me see."

"My dear cousin," cried Mortimer, with some surprise, "what are your proofs?"

"They are such as are more demonstrable to one's own feeling, than another's satisfaction; it is enough that he accosts all women, of whatever rank or character, with a confidence of look and manner which is downright affronting. It seems to say, none can resist me."

"If this is so," observed Lord Mowbray, "I must say, I think Lady Constance quite right."

"My father will decide as he pleases," continued Constance, but with great coldness.

"Why, really," said Lord Mowbray, "a nobleman of his quality, alliances, and credit, and our own relation, too, cannot, after all, be turned away, if he choose to make us a visit. Only I wish that he had replied to your letter, Mortimer, in a manner a little more distinct and respectful. I must say he is wanting to his own sense of proper breeding, to answer me in this flippant way."

"I have told you, my dear uncle, it is the way of the men of fashion at present."

"It was not so in my time," returned Lord Mowbray, "but I suppose he must come."

"Well, then," observed Constance, consoling herself, as if she had recollected something pleasant, "while we have so great a personage to shine upon us, it will be a good time for the castle party," and she looked to her father for consent."

"Nothing can be more opportune," replied Lord Mowbray, "for your birth-day approaches, and there cannot be a better occasion to celebrate that, as we can hold the castle party at the same time."

To all this, Constance assented with the pleasure of her age; and indeed she had for some days looked forward with interest to this little public *fête*, at which she was to preside for the first time, and be presented on her coming out to all her country friends.

CHAPTER XXI.

COUNTY POLICY.

Have a care of your entertainments.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE castle party was an entertainment which Lord Mowbray every autumn, when relaxing from the deep anxieties of politics, had been in the habit of giving to his country neighbours. For he was neither avaricious nor averse to society, though, on these occasions, his hospitalities were plainly with a view to keep up his consequence in the county. Nor is there harm in this, as these parties are so estimated and so received. But the hospitalities of Lord Mowbray had hitherto this peculiar character, that they were thought constrained and dull by almost all who attended them, and who thanked and cared for his lordship as little as his lordship cared for them.

This had by no means escaped De Vere; and

though he was in requisition as a principal actor in the *farce*, (as Harclai always styled it,) it was always with a lassitude and lack of enjoyment that made the signal for these pleasures, no pleasure to *him*.

This year he was particularly averse to it, from the contrast he could not help drawing between his uncle's entertainments and the same sort of *fêtes* at the mansion of a noble person in another county, the Marquess of Clanellan. The Marchioness was the near relation of Constance, and (as has been already said) had had the direction of her education for some years previous to her being introduced.

The Marquess was a man, like Lord Mowbray, of the highest quality; but, unlike Lord Mowbray, of unaffected condescension. Not that high protecting condescension in which the pride that seems to stoop takes really a higher flight, and humbles, and even abases its objects in the act apparently of raising them; but the easy flowing of a kind disposition, glad to relax from the constraints of artificial life, and for the moment to enjoy the equalities of nature. He was unlike Lord Mowbray in every thing else; for he had abilities of the first class, considerable influence at court, and talents for any business; yet,

from a philosophical turn of mind, he abstained from those employments to which he might pretend, and which he had often actually been offered. He was of a most equal temper, the character of which was cheerful, though reflective. He would join in the laugh, whenever laughing was the order of the day; but, for the most part, furnished still more pleasing food for the mind, in the more cultivated and serious hour. His invitations were held as honours, and accepted with delight by all his neighbours. At the same time, in the pleasure they gave, it must be owned he had a puissant ally; for none that ever saw the Marchioness for an hour, but wished to see her again; and none that had passed a day under her roof, but remembered her for ever. She was of a most illustrious family, and yet her birth was the very least of her recommendations. Others might be as great, but she reigned in the heart, while the trappings of others only caught the eye. In truth, she was the personification of benevolence, not unmixed with very lively observation, when folly met her eye; but her benevolence always prevented her observation keen as it was, from amounting to satire. The Marchioness would not hurt any body: to use a trite phrase, she would not hurt

a fly. For these, and a thousand other amiable qualities, the high-born courted, the humble adored her.

De Vere had observed this; and when he saw the marchioness, wondered a little less at the manner and qualities and sentiments of Constance. Whenever he visited these princely persons (but especially upon such public occasions as have been mentioned,) they shewed him how legitimately, as well as how amiably, the great may acquire an ascendancy over those of lesser station, without compromising the dignity of the one, or the independence of the other. It was with a sigh, therefore, that he contemplated the attempts hitherto made at it by his uncle, and made in vain.

But to return from this digression: preparations were now ordered for one of these *fêtes* at Castle Mowbray; cards and notes issued to all the neighbourhood, and even distant parts of the county; and Constance, with the vivacity and eagerness of her age, anticipated both interest and pleasure in the companionship of several persons she was disposed to like, and in the food for observation which might be derived from all.

De Vere warned her not to expect too much;

nay, even to expect disappointment, from the strange dissonances she would have to harmonize, and the reconcilement of very different habits and degrees, which she must attempt at least to accomplish. She only laughed, and called him *Monsieur le Philosophe*, and with the confidence of youth which had as yet seen nothing but happiness, defied all his prophecies. She even smiled when he told her a little history he had learned from Harclai, whom he had seen in a flying visit, after the cards had been issued, and which had not added to his own comfort upon the subject. It was, however, merely a conversation, at which Harclai had recently been present, in a family in the neighbourhood, consisting of the widow and children of a Mr. Greenwood, as it should seem of very different characters and principles.

"It was, I assure you, a high treat to my humour," said Harclai, as he rode out one morning with De Vere.

The family, it seems, were deliberating whether they should accept the invitation they had just received to the Castle party.

"I think you should go," said Mrs. Greenwood, who was a woman of ambition in her way. "The girls never have an opportunity of

seeing good, that is, high company, from year's end to year's end."

"And why should it be good because it is high? and what good will it do them, if they do see it?" said her eldest son, Walter.

"It will shew them proper models, and polish their manners;" answered the aspiring mamma.

"As if the models of Castle Mowbray were fit for us of the Grange," returned Walter, in rather a surly tone. "No! no! we are too downright for such fine titled people, where nothing but my Lord or Sir John, will go down."

"Nay," answered the mother, "though we are not titled, we are as old a family as any without titles, in the county."

"And as poor," returned Walter, with sourness.

"That's no reason we should be lowered," said Mrs. Greenwood.

"But it is a reason why the girls should not expose themselves."

"Expose themselves!" cried the mother, and Miss Charlotte, the youngest daughter, bridling up.

"Yes;" continued Walter; "for they will be either left in a corner, unnoticed, which

will make them miserable; or they will be quizzed for want of fashionable airs. At best, if they meet with any attention, they will be spoiled for ever for their own home."

"But what says Lizzy?" asked Mrs. Greenwood, turning to her eldest daughter.

Miss Lizzy was rather a sentimentalist, and passed a very idle life in reading, without being greatly the better for it. She was even almost a woman of genius, and like many other women of genius, being rather a slattern, she affected to despise dress. In fact, her wardrobe all started up before her, on hearing the proposal, and not having a very good opinion of it, she answered with great decision, "I quite agree with Walter. I am formed for the shade, and not made to swell the train of any Lady Constance, or be triumphed over by fine London people."

"And what says William?" asked the mamma, turning to her second son, who had silently but observingly, if not sneeringly, listened to the conversation.

"Why, that both Walter and Lizzy are prouder than Lord Mowbray and Lady Constance themselves," said William. "Charlotte, I trust, has more sense."

"I confess, I am not afraid of the great," said

Charlotte; "and as to what you say of Lady Constance, I am told she has no pride in her; and I am sure her note is very pretty: for my part I should like to go."

"To be made to feel your insignificance," said the elder brother.

"Dear Walter; you frighten one," cried Charlotte. "Do, William, say what you think."

William was a man of ambition too; and, as it should seem, a philosophical one, but of the school of Aristippus, though he had never heard of him. His philosophy was, practically at least, useful to himself.

"My opinion is, that we should go," answered William.

"To what, and to whom?" returned Walter. "To a man who does not know you; and thinks he stoops in inviting you; and only invites you for the sake of getting your interest in county business?"

"And I go for the sake of getting his entertainments," said William.

"He will not know you out of his own house," said Walter.

"But he knows me in it, and a merry house it is," returned William. "And there is Fox-leigh, and Fairburn, and a heap of old cronies

to talk with at the bottom of the table, so what care I for what is going on at the top."

"But, my Lord," observed Walter.

"Oh! if I went to see a friend," interrupted William, "I allow it would be different. But I go as I would to a play, to see things and people I have little opportunity of seeing elsewhere. I go, too, to eat turtle and venison, which I never get any where. I generally also come away with leave for a day or two's shooting, and thus I make as much use of my lord, as my lord makes of me."

"If you called upon him in town, his door would be shut against you," said Walter.

"Therefore, I never do call upon him in town," answered William.

"Do as you will," said Walter, gloomily; and whistling his spaniel, he walked to the neighbouring market town, where, in his shooting coat and gaiters, he dined with two or three gentleman who farmed, like himself, small estates of their own: and who, together with a topping brewer, an attorney, and a thriving tradesman or two, formed a club, of which he was frequently happy to be chairman.

Here he forgot Lord Mowbray and his castle, and defied his invitations, in the respect which

was paid him by the club, and particularly by the landlord and waiters, to whom all he said was law.

"There go pride and poverty with a vengeance," said William as he lost sight of his brother. "For my part, I am resolved to take the world as it goes; I hope Charlotte will do so too, and if Lady Constance looks cold upon her, she may look cold upon Lady Constance, that's all."

"I love your spirit," said his mother, "it is like my own." With this, it was settled that as mamma was very infirm, she should stay at home with her two poor-spirited children, as she called them, and send the more adventurous couple to seek their fortunes at the castle.

"I hope," said Harclai, as he finished, "they will go back well mortified."

"From your account that will not be easy," replied De Vere, "unless Mr. William miss his day or two's shooting, or the turtle and venison fail at the bottom of the table, which I confess I should not be sorry for."

"Oh! he is a very jewel in his way," said Harclai, "and just the sort of man to give your uncle (saving your presence) a lesson."

De Vere looked grave, for he felt there was too much truth in the observation, and that the

ambition both of Lord Mowbray, and this selfish rustic, might be checked with advantage to both.

"But this Walter, and his elder sister," cried De Vere, recovering, "they seem of more respectable clay."

"I know not," said Harclai; "their selfishness seems more proudly directed, and yet they are perhaps quite as selfish. The one couple are prepared to pay for indulgences they cannot get at home, by sacrifices which delicate minds would not undergo abroad. The others refuse the price, not from delicacy or proper independence, but from a surly consequence of their own, which is not content with its proper place, and is out of humour, because it cannot get a better."

"I believe you may be right," replied De Vere; "yet, do you know, from your account of Walter, I had conceived a wish to call upon him in my uncle's name."

"You may easily try the experiment," said Harclai, "for there stands the Grange, looking as rough and morose as its master."

De Vere looked with some interest at the mansion, and beheld a mixture of farm and gentleman's house, in which a would-be lawn, very

much in want of the scythe, and walks once gravelled, very much in want of the hoe, to say nothing of shrubs once flowering, but grown naked for want of attendance, denoted a comfortlessness, any thing but inviting.

However, Harclai promising to wait for him, De Vere pushed through a gate which turned with difficulty on a broken hinge, and knocked smartly at the door of the house.

The windows of the dining-room, which were in full view, were instantly crowded with Greenwoods, who as instantly retired upon seeing the De Vere livery. A long pause ensued, considering the family could scarcely be denied, after having thus shewn themselves, when instead of the door being opened, De Vere plainly perceived the master of the house, walking out of a side entrance, and making briskly for the kitchen garden; after which a servant appeared with an assurance which (for the sake of country virtue be it said,) seemed to stick in his throat, that none of the family were at home.

De Vere left his card for Mr. Greenwood, and joining Harclai about a furlong off, told him again he believed he was right.

"This Walter," said he, "must be an un-

amiable churl; and the spirit for which I was disposed to honour him, is not genuine, any more than the complying disposition of his brother is amiable."

The visit was not returned, nor even noticed; and De Vere was right in his reflection; for it is inconceivable into what silly mistakes poor human nature is betrayed, by the adulteration of motives. A selfish discontent exhibits itself often in sullen rudeness, which it plumes itself in thinking true dignity of mind; while vanity or a corrupt love of pleasure that is beyond our reach, plunges us frequently into meannesses which an honest man would despise.

"You see, my cousin," said Mortimer to Constance, as he related this scene, "ambition is the same whether in court or country, and whenever it seduces, it betrays."

"And you see, too," replied Constance, "that it is not the country, nor middle life, that is exempt from it."

"That is too true," observed De Vere; "for in other times and stations, if this William could have been a Vicar of Bray, Walter would have been a Cromwell."

CHAPTER XXII.

UNOBTRUSIVENESS.

Shall we have a play extempore?

SHAKSPEARE.

"I AM afraid I shall not give satisfaction to these people," said Constance, after a little sort of reverie, which challenged De Vere's observation; "nor am I sure that what I have set my heart upon will please any one."

"And what can that be?" cried Mortimer, surprised at her eagerness.

"I am not even sure that you will help me in it," added the lady; "though if you don't, there is an end of my dream."

"You rouse my interest more and more, my fair cousin," said De Vere.

"What will you say, then, if I turn manager of a theatre, and have a little play?"

She said this doubtingly, and as if not quite certain that she approved it herself, still less if

he whose opinion she asked, would decide in its favour. But her doubt and her eagerness threw such a beautiful colour into her cheek, and the colour lighted her eyes into such expression, that if De Vere had been a puritan, instead of only an admirer of female delicacy, we believe he would have been ready to subscribe, for the moment, to whatever she pleased. Recollecting himself, however, he asked, "and does my fair cousin mean herself to be the heroine of her own theatre?"

"What if I do?" returned she, with archness; and her countenance became still more and more expressive.

"I should say the audience was too large and too mixed," replied De Vere.

"You would say very right, my cousin," observed Constance, altering her tone; "nor did such a thing ever enter my mind."

"I rejoice," replied Mortimer.

"Why so?"

"Because, though nothing can more delightfully exhilarate a family circle, nothing so charm a fond parent, or an admiring brother, as these little domestic exhibitions of talent, yet for a female whose chief attraction is, perhaps, in her unobtrusiveness,"—here he paused.

"Go on," said Constance, observing his hesitation.

"For a delicate unpractised female," continued he, "as modest and as soft as her youth, to compromise that softness and that modesty which are her principal charms, by an unshrinking display of her character and person to all the world."

"Go on again," said Constance, seeing him still pause, "what then?"

"Why, then, my dear cousin, all the world know her as well as the select few, and the selection is no longer favour."

"Is it then because it enhances favour," said Constance, "that a woman's chief charm is her unobtrusiveness?"

"Oh, believe me, no," replied Mortimer, "it is only an advantage, and *that* an adventitious one. The 'not obvious, not obtrusive, but retired,' so sweetly sung by the poet, who perhaps best sang the sex, depends upon a far different principle. It is intrinsically, and for its own sake, a jewel; but so pure and delicate, that it never was made for the breath of the multitude. Such breathing would soil, nay, destroy it, so delicate is its polish, so fine its composition."

"You would make me afraid of this public exhibition, even if I were inclined to it," observed Constance.

"But you are not, I am sure, inclined to it, dear Constance," continued Mortimer; "for this delicacy, delicious to those who have a sanctioned right to witness it, and which only shews itself brighter by being properly and discreetly displayed, is the true sensitive plant, that shrinks into itself when profaned by promiscuous touch. It hides itself from 'days garish eye,' and is delicacy no longer the moment it can endure the public gaze, much more if it court it."

This is charming, thought Constance, and I will not interrupt him; while De Vere, from the very seriousness of her attention, thinking he might be going too far, interrupted himself.

There was, indeed, a good deal of hesitation on both sides, during this conversation, which was pursued by Mortimer, with that sort of anxiety which attends the assertion of a strong and sincere opinion, when one is not sure, either that it will be welcome, or that one is not taking a liberty in making it.

The vivacity and youth of Constance, to say nothing of general example, made it seem the

most natural thing in the world that she should see no impropriety in the display of such attractive accomplishments. For there is nothing, perhaps, so gladdening to life, as its mimic representations, even in farce. But when the real passages of the world are embodied in what is called elegant comedy; when the manners are caught living as they rise, and the scene is made the vehicle by which the passions and interests of our natures are brought home to our hearts, what wonder either if we love those who so charm us, or if they, knowing that they do so, should take a pride in the display of such an intoxicating talent!

All this De Vere knew, and he was yet to learn if Constance, with such liveliness of fancy, and such powers of expression, might not be blinded by what, on the other hand, might require a refinement of moral reasoning to enforce its condemnation.

Judge then his joy, in hearing her real sentiments, as the conversation proceeded.

"You have said a great many delightful things, cousin Mortimer," observed Constance, "and yet with as much hesitation as if they were disagreeable."

"They would not be agreeable to every

one," replied De Vere, " and I might be condemned as a prude and a proser by at least half the young ladies who possess my cousin's talents or vivacity, if any there are who do possess them."

" That is very adroitly thrown in," observed Constance, " to make your little lecture upon my supposed bias, more palatable. But I must really deprive you of the aid of your pretty compliment."

" Why ?"

" Only because there is no occasion for it; for not one word have you said but has expressed all I feel myself upon the subject of female acting in public."

" Indeed !" cried Mortimer, while his eyes glanced upon her's with that delicious pleasure, which attends the meeting of kindred sentiment. Pleasure at all times, and between persons of the same sex; but between those of different sexes, and in the glow and sensibility of youth, pleasure so enhanced by a thousand indescribable feelings, as baffle all attempt to paint them, even in the moment when we most acknowledge their power. No! in the whole range and scheme of happiness so bountifully designed for us by the Giver of all good, there is perhaps no

one source which can supply so delightful a feast as the discovery of congeniality upon a point of delicacy, between two young persons worthy of one another.

This feast did De Vere now enjoy, and of this fountain did he now drink, so deeply and with such a zest, that he for a while forgot the source which led to it. Constance, however, reverted to it, by acquainting him with her plan.

"Though I quite agree with you," said she, "in all these right notions; and though even in the closest family circle I should have no wish, because no talent, for representing a character myself,—yet I think the plan, as I have modelled it, will compromise nothing of the retiredness which ought to be so sacred. There is at least a difference between the playful mimicry of children, almost in the way of a school exercise, and the display and effort of a grown up woman."

De Vere assented, but asked her meaning.

She then informed him that she had always remembered with pleasure, a little exhibition of the kind she wished, by the children *en pension* in a convent in France: that Lady Clanellan had encouraged and been delighted with it,

though only a little mythological fable, and that she wished something of the kind could be got up now. "I know several clever and pretty children in the neighbourhood," said Constance, "and I have a plan for the prettiest theatre in the world: all *couleur de rose*, I assure you."

"Dear Constance," said De Vere, admiring her eagerness, "how I wish every hour of your life may be as much *couleur de rose* as the present seems to be; but,—"

"I will have no buts," replied the lady, "I want your help."

"And what can I do for you, ma cousine?" asked Mortimer.

"O! a great deal,—for while I am manager of my theatre, you must be the poet."

"I never wrote a verse in my life," replied De Vere, despairingly, yet half laughing at the proposal.

"Then it is time, my grave cousin, you should begin. However, I don't much care about verse: I only want a little allegory or fable, and you shall turn it in prose, if you will; only we have no time to lose, for we have but a week for scenes, actors, rehearsals, and all."

De Vere, delighted to oblige her, said he would

task his imagination; and then recollecting the masques of older times, when princes and peeresses did not refuse themselves to these classical entertainments, he said, that though he could not be a poet, he would endeavour to be a compiler, and compose something for such little mimics as she might procure among her friends in the neighbourhood. "Upon one condition, however," said he, as if suddenly struck with something, "that while you order your theatre, you leave the story entirely to me, and that you do not even know it, till you see it represented."

Constance thought this hard, but was too much interested in her plan, not to comply; and De Vere, telling her he would want about three or four little speakers, and half-a-dozen mutes, they separated, mutually pleased, to prepare for their respective tasks.

As for the fine resolutions which De Vere had *almost* come to, of separating himself from his cousin's too dangerous society, as that could not well be till her birth-day *fête* was over, it was without much scruple—postponed.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN ARRIVAL.

Ask yonder knight in arms,
Both who he is, and why he cometh hither.
SHAKSPEARE.

ALL further moralizing between the cousins was put an end to by the rapid and loud approach of a travelling carriage and four, attended by three outriders; for in those days, when the economy of rumble-tumbles was unknown, the equipage of a great noble bore not that close resemblance to a stage-coach, which it does at present. The clattering, therefore, of horsemen, as well as the thunder of wheels, shook the pavement of the court in which the great entrance-gate of the castle was situated. From a latticed bartizan above, the arrival was witnessed by Mortimer and Constance, who immediately recognized in the splendid blazonry on the pannels, the travelling carriage of the imposing Earl of Cleveland.

It was curiously constructed in the fashion of the time, with a partition lined with crimson velvet, which divided it into two parts; the want of comfortable room being, as it was thought, made up by the avoidance of the greater discomfort of your valet close to your side. Hence before Lord Cleveland descended from one door, his own gentleman, Monsieur Dumont, had got out at the other, to be ready to present his arm to his lord.

Lord Cleveland was magnificently arrayed (the weather having now been cold for some days,) in a rich travelling roupe of purple silk, with Brandenbergs highly braided, and he descended with an air of indifference among the crowd of servants who filled the great door-way, yawning violently as he carelessly threw off his wrapper into the hands of Dumont.

Lord Mowbray having sent Clayton forward to conduct his visitor in, waited for him himself at the head of the grand staircase, and led him through a long and ancient corridor, set thick with arms and armour on both sides, to what was now the drawing-room, but which still sometimes retained its ancient designation of the guard-room.

"Here is the cloth of state," said Lord

Cleveland, looking at the upper end, where was a sort of canopy formed by some antique banners; "but where is the queen?"

"If you mean Lady Constance," said Lord Mowbray, "she cannot be far off."

"I should have sent on my esquire," observed Lord Cleveland, "or blown my bugle under the castle walls; yet I saw no warder to answer."

"Those times are over, happily for us," replied Lord Mowbray.

"That you, a Mowbray, should say 'happily!'"

"Why yes; for I would rather have my head safe on my shoulders, than at the mercy of another. No! no! my good lord, depend upon it, ministerial influence is better than baronial power. But pray tell me, how is the minister? still gouty? still complaining?"

"Absolutely bedridden," replied Lord Cleveland, "and what is worse, there is no approaching him. Nay, it is said, but I have not ascertained it," then lowering his voice in Lord Mowbray's ear, as Clayton was present—added, "refused a visit from the king."

"Astonishing!" exclaimed Lord Mowbray; "I fear he breaks much, both in body and mind."

"It is thought he will not last till parliament meet," observed Cleveland, "and then, who will in your opinion succeed?"

"Ah! my goodlord," replied Lord Mowbray, bowing low, and smiling at the same time, "you are more likely to be in that secret than I. Possibly you may have even been consulted."

The Earl did not look displeased, but said nothing on the subject in words. What he did say, was about Statira and Sysigambis, who seemed to start from the tapestry, in a flood of beautiful colouring. This diversion of the conversation did not escape Lord Mowbray, who interchanged looks of meaning with his secretary. Then after a short pause he proceeded, "Whatever the event, I am sure his majesty cannot be in better hands; but I fear you are too idle, that is, too fond of the pleasures of your age."

The Earl bowed again, and again not displeased, but still looking at the tapestry.

"That figure of Hæphestion," said he, "seems very fine."

Lord Mowbray and his secretary once more looked at one another, till the former proceeded. "Yes! you are too idle, that is, too much above

business, which should be left for such old people as I——"

"And friend Clayton there," added Cleveland, with something between a jest and a sneer.

"Mr. Clayton," said Lord Mowbray, "will you be so kind as to inquire after Lady Constance, and let her be informed of Lord Cleveland's arrival—I dare say she is with her aunt."

"Or her cousin," interposed Cleveland, with a continuation of the sneer.

"They sometimes ride together," returned the matter-of-fact Lord Mowbray; then reverting to the former subject, in a lower tone, he continued, "you see I press no secrets, I only beg leave to say, should it be necessary, you may depend upon *me*."

"My very good lord," returned Cleveland, bowing again, and brightening up; and then he let fall something about pleasing connection, so ambiguously tickling, yet, upon the whole, so agreeable, that Lord Mowbray, whether he thought of politics or love, was never better pleased with a visit in his life.

"We may talk farther of this," observed Cleveland.

"We certainly may," returned the noble politician; "and now I think of it, nothing can be better timed, than the entertainments we are about to give, and which commence to-morrow. Your visit would otherwise have been proclaimed at Whitehall and St. James's, but all will now be safe."

"Always the same prudence and foresight," said Cleveland; "but hang politics, here's metal more attractive."

"My daughter is much obliged to you," said Lord Mowbray, as Lady Constance entered with her aunt, and did the honours of the castle, in a manner which the Earl, though struck more than ever with her beautiful dignity, could have wished not quite so dignified as it was.

To both Lady Constance, and Lady Eleanor however, he assumed his best style, which Lady Eleanor afterwards pronounced, and Constance admitted, was perfectly that of *l'homme de naissance*, and which at least had the effect for the moment of reducing Clayton to insignificance.

To Lady Eleanor, indeed, he said a thousand obliging things of her son, and, upon his entrance, treated him with so much respect, and so perfectly *en égal*, that one lady was much

won, and the other much softened, by a demeanour which seemed so proper in the eyes of both. Clayton, however, was here so little pleased, and indeed so out of his element, that he retired, as he said, to write letters, not without secretly wishing Lord Cleveland at the devil.

Lord Cleveland was a man of taste, and descanted skilfully, and (as it would have been thought even by Constance, had he not been Lord Cleveland,) pleasingly, upon the grandeur of the situation of the castle, and the proud interests created by all that it exhibited.

"It is worthy the ancient nobles of the kingdom," said he, "and puts to shame the upstart palaces (even though they *are* palaces) of modern riches. My fine mansion in the north, (though I flatter myself it is on a pure Grecian model,) cannot compare to this. Eustace was right in all he said of it."

"Do you know any thing of Lord Eustace?" asked Lord Mowbray; "he wrote to Mortimer that he should travel with you."

"He had not the same motives to set off so soon," said Cleveland, looking both at Lord Mowbray and his daughter, "and I was too powerfully interested to wait."

Here again was an agreeable ambiguity to

THE TAJNOOR ... WATI MAHAL

Lord Mowbray, whether intended for politics or love. "It is very true," observed his lordship, significantly, "he might be in the way for the first twenty-four hours."

Lord Cleveland, however, had cared little for his presence, but offered to wait for him as long as he pleased, in the hope (if it must be known) to have a joint paymaster of his horses, for so large a proportion of his northern journey; and this was only given up, because Eustace was uncertain whether he could come at all.

The rattling of another carriage, however, announced another arrival, and to the surprise of all assembled, the doubt about his visit was put an end to, by the appearance of Eustace himself.

"You are an extravagant, as well as a churlish fellow," cried Lord Cleveland, "to travel alone, when you might have saved your horses by coming with me."

"The minister was so ill," said Eustace, in a hurried voice, "that no one could say whether he could leave town or not; and I did not resolve to do so, till you had been gone an hour. He was reckoned a little better yesterday, and the king had sent twice to inquire after him."

This called up all Lord Mowbray's interests.

"I fear," said he, "we are likely to lose him," and he shook his head very fervidly. "If the gout gets into his stomach, he is a gone man. And what the country is to do——"

"Oh! the country will do very well," returned Eustace, with animation; "only that the world are astonished, I can tell you, Lord Cleveland, at your running away to the north just as people of all ranks are flocking to the palace."

"I am not in the north," replied Cleveland, "nor likely to go there while there is so delightful a place midway to stop me."

"To be sure," cried Eustace, "you can get to town much sooner from hence, if wanted."

"You are *politique si enragé*," observed Cleveland, "that you can give one no credit for other and better motives. For my part, should the minister die to-morrow, I should feel too happy with my kind hosts here to move."

"I fancy," returned Eustace, laughing, "you would then reckon *without* your *host*. Indeed, my father rather wondered at Lord Mowbray's being out of town at such a time."

Lord Mowbray looked alarmed, and, indeed, from the first arrival of Eustace was by no means at his ease.

" If this unlucky party," said he, " could be put off, and I thought I should be really wanted——"

" Every body is wanted," cried Eustace, with quickness, " and though a mere subaltern, my father would hardly let me come; nor would he at all, I believe, had he not had a packet for me to give to Lord Cleveland."

The Earl rather knit his brow as he took the packet, and without opening it, put it in his pocket. It is certain Lord Mowbray would at that moment have given one whole year's office salary to have known the contents of that packet.

" I think, my dear," said Lady Eleanor to Constance, " we are in the way among these great statesmen, and they will thank us to leave them by themselves."

Neither her father nor Lord Eustace opposed this. Indeed, that young nobleman flew to the door to open it for them, as they sought to retire; when Cleveland, interposing with an authoritative air over Eustace, protested that it was very hard that he should have come above a hundred miles to poison them with politics, and deprive them of social pleasure, which, particularly in the country, ought to be held sacred.

Lady Eleanor declared herself of the same opinion; and Cleveland, spite of all Lord Mowbray's representations, protesting that he would not read his packet till night, Lady Eleanor proposed shewing the castle to their distinguished guest; in which Lord Mowbray could not help joining; and De Vere observing Eustace absorbed with any thing but house-seeing, fairly carried him off, saying he would shew him the park.

"With all submission to your cousin's charms," said Eustace, as soon as they were alone, "I am astonished at the noble earl we have just left. My father's packet is not a thing to be slighted; and should he lose an advantage by his delay, I am mistaken if he will not most cruelly rue it."

"Who, then," observed De Vere, "shall say that ambition is his ruling passion, however it may be yours?"

"And is it not yours?" asked Eustace.

"Mine! O! ay! yes! I believe it is,—or rather it was, when I was in its hot-bed in London. Here we have been all in a calm for these two months."

"So I have heard, and I was astonished," returned Eustace, "particularly when I think,

as I do every moment, how very few years Mr. Wentworth, who has so long been distinguished, has the start of us. I cannot sleep for it. Yet here we are; you slumbering over even your seat in parliament, and I scarcely known, except for a single maiden speech. But who would have thought *you* would be so indolent? even Clayton will beat you."

"Can we be better than happy?" asked De Vere. Yet he closed the question with a sigh.

"That is at least not said in a happy tone," cried Eustace, "and I should fear from what I see, and what I have heard, that a high minded beauty has already spoiled a high minded statesman."

De Vere was scarlet to the ears, at this speech; for he had flattered himself that feelings, which his own heart hardly understood, were not suspected by the rest of the world. Moreover, he had resolved that, whatever they were, they should not be even whispered, so as, perhaps, to affect the conduct of the lovely being who had excited them.

Making a great effort, therefore, to recover himself, he replied, "My dear Eustace, these are words of course, and could not but be applied to any two persons who had passed a month

together any where; but particularly in an old castle in the country. That you point at my cousin is clear; that you are wrong is equally so; witness my having urged both you and Lord Cleveland to come down to us; you, who might be, and he, whom I know to be, a most powerful rival—nay, a rival with whom, even if I could, I would not allow myself to enter into competition."

"You were always honourable," said Eustace, pressing his hand, "and I did but jest; but upon my word, Cleveland is a riddle. I know his very soul is in politics and court intrigue; he has the ear of the king; the time is such, that he may play at cups and balls with the ministry, and yet he has run away after a mere beauty."

"Mere beauty!" exclaimed De Vere.

"Oh! I cry you mercy, Signor," returned his friend, "one must have a care of such perfect freedom as yours. Well, I will allow the Lady Constance to be all even you and Cleveland can think her; nay, I am sure I admire her as much as either of you would wish me. But I say again, who would throw away the certainty of power for the uncertainty of a woman's smile?"

"Not you, it seems," said De Vere, laughing; "but suppose it the *certainty!*" and his laugh ceased.

"I am not sure it would make any difference," returned the young aspirant. "In short, ambition, shadowy as you may think it, is, I allow, my mistress; and until I succeed with her, I leave all those of flesh and blood to you and Cleveland.

"'Tis a fair compromise," said De Vere, with satisfaction, "and I will take care to inform my Lord Cleveland that you are not in his way."

"He would be affronted at the very supposition," observed Eustace, "and might put me to death for my presumption. But we have at least given him fair play, and I must really *force* him to read his packet, and answer Lord Oldcastle to-night, or I shall never be deemed fit for any thing but a dangling appendage of a placeman, for which no qualification is required—but what I had in my cradle—a title."

The friends then made towards the castle; and as they climbed up the steep footpath which left the carriage way winding around them, they beheld Lord Cleveland, who had said he would not open his packet till night,

wrinkling his front over it, in the window of his dressing-room. Cleveland, immediately on perceiving Eustace, beckoned him to come to him; a sign which that eager young man with alacrity obeyed.

The conference lasted long; nor did the castle party meet again till all were assembled at dinner, with the addition of Constance's most loved friend, the Marchioness, who had come to do honour to the birth-day *fête*, which was to be held the next day.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A CHANGE.

> Her heavenly form
> Angelic, but more soft and feminine.
> Her graceful innocence, her every aid
> Of gesture, or least action, overaw'd
> His malice, and with rapine sweet bereav'd
> His fierceness.
>
> MILTON.

THE presence of Lady Clanellan was a real comfort to the apprehensions of Constance, who, from the manner both of Lord Cleveland and her father, added to De Vere's late insinuations, and even her aunt's high principled representations, had begun to conceive ominous portents from the visit of the Earl.

It is most certain that during the hour which had passed in shewing him the castle, the gardens, and, (as Lord Mowbray insisted upon it) the dairy house, with its beautiful precinct, he had laid himself out to act the character of the most sincere, as well as respectful admirer that ever youthful lady entertained in hall or bower.

Every one of the few sentences she uttered,

seemed only spoken to be echoed by his own sentiments; and he even moralized very prettily in the bee-garden, upon the uselessness of immoderate wealth, and its inefficacy to secure happiness; which, he admitted, was after all the only true object of ambition, and of course the only pursuit of a wise man. In short, to believe the Earl, he could have rested perfectly content, nay, would perhaps prefer a lot which confined him to the moderation of this little scene, to the indulgences of riches, and the pomp of power. Ambition itself sank to nothing in the comparison.

But neither Lady Eleanor nor Constance were deceived;—though Lord Mowbray, who had learned from Eustace the nature of his errand to Lord Cleveland, smiled inwardly, and not without complacency, to think how love could change a man's innate disposition. He was by no means displeased therefore to believe that this little aberration from the earl's great passion (so near upon the point of being gratified,) was occasioned by a desire to connect himself where most Lord Mowbray wished him to be connected.

Lady Eleanor and Constance, however, remembered the letter which De Vere had read to them but a few days before. Constance thought

of the contrast with even disgust, and felt that surely pardonable anger, which a self-respecting young person must always feel when she thinks a man, for his own purposes, presumes he may trifle with her understanding.

Such seemed evidently the conduct of Lord Cleveland in thus so suddenly playing the sentimentalist; nor would Constance, though pressed, in his most plausible strain, to agree with him in the soft notions which he continued to unfold, condescend even to give an opinion, but busied herself with pretended little cares about her favourite domain.

In truth, his new character sat but awkwardly upon Lord Cleveland; and Constance was glad to hear from her aunt, a sort of reproach which she thought might be unbecoming in herself. Lady Eleanor was struck with the contradiction between Lord Cleveland's letter and his present opinions, and presuming upon her age, did not refrain from telling him so. At another time in her life, she might have rallied him upon it with keenness, and even with wit; but the buoyancy of her spirit had long been broken, and she could only be roused to this sort of exertion, by a sense of his impropriety of conduct, and the necessity of repressing it.

With some gravity, therefore, if not dignity of tone, she said, "Your lordship must really imagine us weak women, to be the poor, *believing* creatures the men sometimes represent us, when you practise upon us thus. Unfortunately we have been favoured with your real sentiments in your letter to my son. We there saw what the great Lord Cleveland thought of grandeur or moderation, excitement or placidity, town or country."

The earl looked uneasy, if not disconcerted, at this reproach, in a presence where he most wished to be free from it. Eyeing Constance, therefore, with a humble and even tender air, he said, it seemed not a little hard that he should be concluded in a matter in which he felt so sincere, merely from a piece of badinage, in which no one could suppose him serious.

In this, he was joined by Lord Mowbray, who saw the coldness of his daughter's looks with regret, and was by no means pleased with this check given by Lady Eleanor to a discourse, which, beginning in sentiment, might have ended in something still more tender.

As it was, Lord Cleveland observed, that he was the more unfortunate, because (whether he might be believed or not, he presumed not to

say,) it was never of more consequence to him to be thought sincere.

"And yet, for the life of me," added he, "I cannot understand why I am supposed to laugh at romance, except for my foolish letter."

"You laugh at every thing, my lord," observed Constance, gravely.

"No! on my honour," replied he, "spirits may run away with any one, but never did any thing truly respectable receive an affront from me."

"And yet," returned Constance, "how did you once lavish your ridicule upon I know not what unfortunate couple just married, on their retiring to the country?"

"Perhaps," replied the earl, gaily, "I thought of the Duke of Buckingham, who said to a dog that had bit him, 'I wish you were married and settled in the country.' But seriously, I believe it was to get rid of my envy of their happiness; for such I felt it to be, while I myself seemed alone in the world, stranded on its shores, as if from a wreck. No, Lady Constance, as well might I be accused,"—and here he placed his hand on his breast with an air by no means ungraceful—"of laughing at what I most respect, the persons who stand before me."

Though the word persons was in the plural number, the bow and pointed look with which it was accompanied, all shewed the individual for whom this speech was most intended; and to say the truth, it called up a little colour in the cheek of Constance, who afterwards owned to her aunt, that if Lord Cleveland had not been too much spoiled to be reclaimed, there seemed to have been that in him originally which would have become his high station.

"And do you think this?" said Lady Eleanor.

"As much as I can, thinking so little of him at all," replied Constance. "He certainly seemed more in earnest, or I should rather say less offensively and affectedly sarcastic to-day, than I ever remember him."

Lady Eleanor was not without reasons for scrutinizing the feeling with which this was said, and she did scrutinize it; but though, while she did so, her mind could not help wandering to her son, her observation upon it was that of the clearest disinterestedness.

"I quite agree with you," said she: "from the first, I have been struck with a sort of natural elevation, something commanding in this spoiled child of the world, as you properly call

him, which surely cannot be wholly extinguished, and which, with proper help, might yet be prosperously developed. Shall I tell you, too, what I think is the help required?"

With some vivacity, Constance asked—"What?"

"A pure and real passion," returned Lady Eleanor, "for a pure and virtuous woman, who might re-kindle natural feeling, and recover his deadened sense of goodness by the communication of her own. In short, my dear Constance, if nature really meant Lord Cleveland for what you yourself seem to suppose, I know nothing so likely as that charming self, to bring him back to her sway."

At these words she kissed her gentle niece, who was far from displeased at this proof of her good opinion, though whether intrinsically as such, or connected with the ideas thus kindled of Lord Cleveland, might be doubtful.

"Nay," continued Lady Eleanor, seeing Constance shake her head, and look as if she brooded over some strong internal feeling, "it is impossible, I think, to mistake the present behaviour of this nobleman; his attentions—"

"Are the same," interrupted Constance, "to all women of any note, or I had almost said,

whether of note or not, and as such, can only be to amuse the passing hour; such attentions"—

"Are not for you, dearest Constance; I know this full well," continued Lady Eleanor; "but at least you may be unjust, in setting this down for granted without trial or inquiry; and considering his rank, wealth, and power, nay, even his seeming accomplishments of mind, I should be sorry that a match in these respects so every way worthy of you, should be *rashly* rejected."

"Am I, then, to suppose," said Constance, gravely, "that, taking for granted these intentions of Lord Cleveland, my aunt is his friend?"

"Friend is too pronounced a character," replied Lady Eleanor, repressing something like uneasiness, (for she thought how the part she was acting might influence the fate of her son); "I should indeed affront my niece to suppose a friend could avail any thing in such a matter. Heaven knows too," (and here a little pent up sigh could not be restrained,) "I have no cause for being the friend of Lord Cleveland or any one; but I should think myself blameable so as never to pardon myself ——"

"For Heaven's sake, my dearest aunt," inter-

rupted Constance, "what can occasion this eagerness of language, in regard to a person you know less of, I believe, than myself?"

"True," said Lady Eleanor, resuming a quiet tone; "I know little of Lord Cleveland; all I meant was, that I could not sit quietly by and see what may be prejudice at work to obstruct your worldly advantage, and not caution you against such a prejudice, and in this even Mortimer agrees."

"Mortimer! Has *he* then given any opinion? and of all men, in Lord Cleveland's favour?"

"Not positively an opinion," returned Lady Eleanor; "nor would De Vere ever presume that he had a right to form one."

"And why not?" asked Constance. "Is he not my cousin and my friend? And have I any brother, or even sister to confer with? And *ought* he not, therefore, if he knows any thing of Lord Cleveland or his views, not only to form, but give an opinion?"

"To me, yes!" replied Lady Eleanor, struck with her openness; "to you, certainly not."

"What! not even if I ask him?"

"It would be difficult, I grant you, to refuse; but still, unless asked by Lord Mowbray in form, as one of the family ——"

"And does he stand upon such etiquette?" said Constance, with gravity. "But after all, may I not ask of you what his opinion is?"

"It is the same as my own," replied Lady Eleanor; nor did all her feeling for her son prevent her uttering this with the firm decision that belonged to her.

Constance became more and more serious, and with some emotion observed, "Mortimer then wishes me to listen to Lord Cleveland."

"Oh, no! he only thinks Lord Cleveland should not, without trial, or hearing, be treated like a rejected man."

The Lady Constance pondered these words, and turned them over and over again in her mind; and if she could not help thinking it a little strange that her aunt and cousin should deem it necessary to take any trouble at all in favour of Lord Cleveland, it is, perhaps, no more than what the reader has anticipated; nor could I ever discover a clue to it among any of the maxims that govern ordinary life.

What did really govern them, though spontaneously starting in their minds, without communicating with each other, savoured indeed a little of a generosity bordering on romance, which I by no means present to the world as an

object of wisdom or imitation. Indeed, both mother and son have, I know, been called very great fools for their pains; but it is my business to represent things as they occurred, and I return.

"'Tis enough, my dear aunt," said Constance. "Lord Cleveland is at least my father's guest, and you and my cousin are very good to recommend him, as if he were mine."

She said this rather coldly, and was going on, when the conference was broken up by the announcement of Lady Clanellan, and the castle was again occupied by the bustle of an arrival.

The Marchioness was soon closeted with her young friend. It was too late to greet Lord Mowbray, and the half hour they had to spare was past in mutual and pleasing interrogatories, during which Lady Clanellan did not conceal from Constance the reports which had reached her of Lord Cleveland's attentions to her in town, from the moment of her being presented, and the intentions which all the world attributed to him in coming to the castle at a time perhaps the most critical, to a man of his known ambition, that could well be imagined.

Constance was grave, and, indeed, the conversation she had just had with her aunt, would

have absorbed her mind, but for the arrival of her friend. Nor could she exactly analyse, to what extent Lady Eleanor had intended to go, in favour of Lord Cleveland, nor her motives for doing so—still less the sentiments of her son. They neither satisfied nor pleased her, and yet we cannot say they were altogether without impression. "I have perhaps done Lord Cleveland injustice," said she to herself; "but how are my aunt or my cousin interested in telling me so?" So said this artless and inexperienced young creature, who if she could have looked into the minds of either, would have found them any thing but interested in favour of Cleveland.

Still, as has been said, it was not without effect; and from having thought that she had done him wrong, Constance came almost to think of Lord Cleveland as a person to whom she owed a large arrear of right.

Her ears were therefore at least not ill-disposed to his subject, nor was it with the usual indifference that she found herself listening to Lady Clanellan's *causerie* concerning him.

The Marchioness knew the Earl only by his general reputation, as a man almost at the head of politics, and entirely at the head of fashion. If any thing, therefore, she inclined to fall in

with the general opinion concerning him; and supposing what she had heard of his attentions to Constance, true, it is certain that neither her opinion, nor her advice concerning him, did him disservice. This, added to what had just passed with her aunt, and, shall we say, to something like an unsatisfied (for we will not call it a displeased) feeling, in regard to Mortimer's conduct and opinions, inclined Constance, upon the whole, to shew more favour, or rather less distance, to the prosperous Lord Cleveland, than she had ever done before. It was a change that could not escape him, and during the whole of dinner, and afterwards, his pleased and quick eye was bent upon her every look and action, and his ear drank every sound she uttered, with an avidity, as well as a respect, with which no female had ever before inspired him.

Strange that such should be the power of an unsophisticated girl, however lovely, upon perhaps the most sophisticated, practised man of the age, in all that belonged to artificial life; yet so it was. For such is the force of nature, however repressed, however perverted or distorted by even habitual indulgence, that there are times when she will return in all her

native beauty, and charm the most pampered mind back to the purer pleasures she always intended for us.

Thus it was with Cleveland, the spoiled child, as he had justly been called, of fortune and the world. He had been worn out by perpetual excitement; he was *blazé* in every sense he possessed; he had crushed the sweet poison of misused indulgence, till its attractions had no longer any hold on him; and it was only when he looked at the freshness and innocence of Constance, just entering into life, that he still thought there was any thing in life worth possessing. Like the Enchanter, he might say, that other things had sometimes

> " In pleasing slumber lull'd the sense,
> And in sweet madness robb'd it of itself;
> But such a sacred and home-felt delight,
> Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
> He never heard till now."

Thus felt Lord Cleveland, and, unlike the Enchanter, with both the wish and the hope of reformation; though from fatal experience he knew that to wish, with him, was far easier than to hope.

To do him justice, he understood so much

of his own case as at least to perceive the means of its restoration, if not past cure: and his admiration of Constance approached so nearly to the love of virtue, that he wished to recover the purity which he knew had abandoned him, by seeking in her to ally himself with virtue herself. Could he succeed, the thought of a renovation of mind, proceeding from such a delightful source, took possession of him with such a charm that it thrilled to his heart.

Alas! it was like those fond dreams in anatomical science, which have, with more daring than truth, supposed it possible for youthful veins to be safely opened, and their healthful vigour infused into the dried up sluices of age. The attempt, however, in either case, ought not to be contemned.

From all this, it appears, that Lord Cleveland's admiration of Constance was not only sincere, but that his love of her character turned him with compunction to the contemplation of his own. The result did him no harm. He became for a time natural, easy, and almost modest. The flow of his mind seemed purified; his respect was evidently genuine; and Constance, after having herself never been so communicative, owned to the Marchioness and Lady

Eleanor, that Lord Cleveland could be very agreeable, nay, even respectable, if he pleased.

The additional power of pleasing which this feeling had given to herself, confirmed her influence over him in the most pointed degree. If, as a beautiful statue, (for so insensible had she hitherto always seemed to the Earl's attentions,) she could still maintain her empire, the relaxation of her austerity only made him more and more alive to the charm that bound him.

Nor can any one wonder at this, who has ever felt the augmented power of an amiable object, when we discover the least indication of a reciprocity of feeling. The eye that does not avoid being sought by ours; the glance returned, though ever so passing; the hand's soft pressure in the least repaid; the little request granted with alacrity; the sentiment re-echoed; the unobvious, yet discoverable pleasure in the acceptance of homage—these are heighteners of beauty beyond all the powers of art to equal; they give loveliness a charm which even Nature did not intend, and can almost soften ugliness itself into something like attraction.

The dinner, therefore, and the evening at Castle Mowbray, on the first day of the Earl's arrival, seemed not only to his delighted sense,

but to his better and clearer feelings, an Elysium which, if ever he had felt it, he had despaired of feeling again; and he lay down to rest revolving dreams, which, could they be realized, were, as he thought, worth more than the world, and which, though they might be merely dreams, had made him already a better and a happier man.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

SHACKELL AND BAYLIS, JOHNSON'S-COURT.